

12. How are human rights considerations factored into an assessment?

Human rights considerations are a critical element in decisions on military goods export applications. Policy experts begin by examining the overall human rights situation in the recipient country. They look at civil rights, personal safety and political freedoms. They also take into account specific issues affecting ethnic, religious or other groups within that society.

These analysts recognize that the human rights situation in a country can change rapidly. To get the most current and complete information, they draw on the knowledge of Canadian diplomats in the field. They also monitor the international media and check information from the United Nations and other reputable sources.

The buyer, the proposed export and its possible uses are all considered from a human rights perspective. The policy experts ask whether a proposed export could be used against the human rights of people in that country. For example, a replacement part for a naval ship's radar or an engine in an old Canadian-built transport aircraft might be acceptable if it had no uses that could harm human rights.

A proposed firearms or ammunition export might be rejected because the end user is a repressive militia or police force and the export could realistically be used to suppress human rights. But in another case in the same country, the importer might be a private gun club with a valid licence to import a specialized target-shooting gun.