



NO ARMS FOR ATROCITIES OR ABUSES

COMMIT TO AN EFFECTIVE
ARMS TRADE TREATY

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



“He fell on the ground but nobody was able to take him away from the street as the tanks were nearby. That is when an army tank deliberately crushed his body repeatedly.”

Eyewitness account of the killing of Khaled al-Hamedh in Hama, Syria

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the global trade in conventional arms carries an enormous human cost. Serious human rights abuses have been committed around the world using a wide range of weaponry, armaments, munitions and related material. Thousands of people have been killed, injured, raped and forced to flee from their homes as a result.

Weaknesses and loopholes in existing national, regional and multilateral arms control mechanisms have enabled states and other parties to continue trading arms irresponsibly and with impunity. But now the absence of international standards to adequately regulate conventional arms trading and transfers can finally be addressed.

In July 2012, UN member states will be invited to the UN conference to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty. Prior to this, states will be refining their positions on the Treaty's content and participating in the final preparatory meeting in February 2012. Now is the time to ensure that the Treaty contains the highest possible common standards for the import, export and

transfer of conventional arms. This is essential to help prevent serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The likelihood of an international arms transfer being used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law must be rigorously assessed and, where the risk is substantial, the transfer should not be authorized. Risk analysis should also examine the likelihood of any foreseeable events to prevent such future violations.

This briefing documents five personal stories in the context of human rights violations committed or facilitated using conventional arms in law enforcement or military operations. The main suppliers of the types of arms used by military, security or police forces, or armed groups are shown in each case.

Amnesty International is calling on political leaders and state officials to take action for the individuals in the following cases using the postcards provided and to lobby their governments to commit to an effective Arms Trade Treaty with respect for human rights at its core.



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SYRIA LIVES LOST IN VIOLENT CRACKDOWN

KHALED AL-HAMEDH

Shortly after breakfast on 31 July 2011, 21-year-old construction worker Khaled al-Hamedh left his home in the city of Hama to buy medicine for his four-year-old brother, who had a fever. He never came home. Several hours later, family members laid him to rest in the garden of nearby al-Serjawi mosque, his body crushed and a bullet wound in his back.

When Khaled al-Hamedh walked out into Hama's Bab Qebli neighbourhood that morning, Syrian security forces were encroaching on the city with tanks and firing into residential areas. Bystanders later recounted to his family that he had been "shot in the back while attempting to cross over to the hospital". An army tank then deliberately drove over him. Only when the tanks had pulled away could bystanders approach and take Khaled al-Hamedh's body to the hospital.



SRI LANKA STUDENT SHOT DEAD

RAGIHAR MANOHARAN

Ragihar Manoharan (*above*) was one of five Tamil students shot dead by Sri Lankan security forces in the north-eastern town of Trincomalee on 2 January 2006. He was 20 years old.

Ragihar was with fellow students on Trincomalee's seafront when someone in a passing auto-rickshaw threw a grenade, which injured several in the group. A short time later, 10 to 15 uniformed officers arrived, believed to be police from the elite Special Task Force. They put the injured students into their jeep and beat them with rifle butts before pushing them out onto the road. Witnesses stated that the officers then shot dead all five students, including Ragihar.

A commission was established to investigate the incident but its report has never been published. No thorough investigation has ever been conducted and no one has been

brought to justice for the murder of Ragihar and his companions.

Sri Lanka emerged from a bitter and protracted armed conflict in 2009. The conflict between the government and the armed separatist group, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), lasted almost three decades. Both parties committed serious human rights violations and tens of thousands of civilians were killed; many more were injured and abused.

Despite these persistent serious human rights violations committed by Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE, and in the absence of an effective Arms Trade Treaty, foreign governments continued to allow the supply of a wide range of weaponry, munitions and other equipment to Sri Lanka.



MAIN ARMS SUPPLIERS TO SRI LANKA

A range of conventional arms have been supplied to Sri Lanka between 2000 and 2009 by several states including China, Czech Republic, Israel, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Ukraine and the USA.

- According to UN trade data, Pakistan supplied military weapons to Sri Lanka worth US\$6 million in 2008 and 2009, and the USA supplied US\$6.4 million in 2007 and 2008 respectively. Pakistan was also a major supplier of munitions.
- Between 2001 and 2009, major suppliers of munitions of war included Israel (US\$2.88 million), Slovakia (US\$4.3 million) and the USA (US\$3.95 million).
- China has supplied a wide range of arms. For example, in May 2007, *Jane's Defence Weekly* reported that, according to a cabinet memorandum, the Sri Lankan government agreed a US\$37.6 million deal with Chinese company Poly Technologies to supply munitions such as cannon charge shells and mortars. Sri



Left: A Special Task Force motorcycle unit soldier guards a roadside checkpoint in Colombo, Sri Lanka, November 2008.

Below: A funeral procession for five students who were killed by Sri Lankan security forces in Trincomalee on 2 January 2006.

Lanka had a previous ammunition contract worth US\$100 million with another Chinese company, Norinco.

■ Between 2000 and 2006, the main suppliers of heavy weaponry and armaments, including battle tanks, armoured vehicles, rocket systems, combat aircraft and helicopters, were China, Czech

Republic, Israel, Pakistan, Russia and Ukraine.

■ European Union (EU) export data shows that the UK, Czech Republic, Spain, Slovakia and Bulgaria were the largest suppliers of arms to Sri Lanka between 2001 and 2008.

■ In February 2010, the Russian Federation and Sri Lanka signed a US\$300 million loan for the supply and repair of a range of arms, including military helicopters.

The LTTE has continued to source arms through well-developed arms trafficking networks, and has captured much of its artillery from the Sri Lanka Army.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon should:

■ Establish an independent, international mechanism to investigate crimes under international law committed in Sri Lanka, including the killing of Ragihar Manoharan and his companions.

■ Make the results public and, where there is sufficient evidence, prosecute those responsible in proceedings that meet international fair standards.