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Sudan: Arms trade fuelling human rights abuse in Darfur

The helicopter pilots deliberately and indiscriminately attacked the informal internally displaced persons' settlement knowing very well that there were innocent civilians.

African Union Commission Ceasefire Violation report on the attack in Hashaba and Gallab Villages on 26 August 2004

The only thing in abundance in Darfur is weapons. It's easier to get a Kalashnikov than a loaf of bread.
Jan Egeland, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, 1 July 2004

Amnesty International today revealed details of the uncontrolled arms exports that have fuelled massive human rights abuses in Sudan, including the killing, rape, torture and displacement of more than a million civilians since the Darfur conflict began in February 2003.

"Governments must stop turning a blind eye to the immediate and long term consequences of this totally irresponsible trade. They must ensure that the UN Security Council imposes a mandatory and rigorously monitored arms embargo on all parties to the conflict in Sudan including the government's armed forces. The embargo should aim to stop all exports of arms that are likely to be used to commit human rights violations," said Elizabeth Hodgkin, Amnesty International's Sudan researcher.

At a news conference in Nairobi ahead of this week's meeting of the UN Security Council in the same city, Amnesty International delegates presented a report identifying the main types of arms sent to Sudan and the governments that have deliberately or unwittingly allowed them to be sent.

The report, *Sudan: Arming the perpetrators of grave abuses in Darfur* shows how Sudanese government forces and their militia allies have used such arms for grave human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"Two Antonov aeroplanes, five helicopters and two MIGs attacked our village at around 6am. Five tanks came into town. The attack lasted until 7pm...Eighteen men and two children from our family were killed when fleeing." Testimony given to Amnesty International in May 2004 by Aziza Abdel Jaber Mohammed and her half sister Zahra Adam Arja on the attack of Kornoy in North Darfur in December 2003.

Based on the testimony of hundreds of survivors gathered by Amnesty International as well as commercial documents, UN arms trade data and other sources - the report's main findings include:

Military aircraft and components sold to Sudan from the Russian Federation, China and Belarus, with helicopter spare parts from Lithuania, despite repeated use of such aircraft to bomb villages and support ground attacks on civilians;

Tanks, military vehicles and artillery transferred to Sudan from Belarus, Russia and Poland, even though such equipment has been used to help launch indiscriminate and direct attacks on civilians;

Grenades, rifles, pistols, ammunition and other small arms and light weapons exported to Sudan from many countries, but mainly China, France, Iran and Saudi Arabia;

The recent involvement of arms brokering companies from the UK and Ireland attempting to provide large numbers of Antonov aircraft and military vehicles from Ukraine and pistols from Brazil;

Military training and cooperation offered by Belarus, India, Malaysia and Russia.

"Some governments such as Bulgaria, Lithuania and the UK have already begun to take action to halt the arms flows to Sudan, and the European Union has imposed an embargo, but other governments show no sign of wanting to turn off the tap that is fuelling these atrocities", said Brian Wood, Amnesty International's research manager on the arms and security trade

Amnesty International is appealing to the UN Security Council to impose a mandatory arms embargo to halt exports of arms likely to be used to commit human rights violations. The embargo should be accompanied by rigorous UN monitoring both inside and outside Sudan.

The organization is calling on all states mentioned in the report to take immediate concrete steps to suspend all transfers of those types of arms and related logistical and security supplies that are being used for grave human rights violations in Sudan.

To prevent the arms trade from contributing to such disasters, Amnesty International is also campaigning for all states to establish much more rigorous controls on conventional arms, including the establishment of an Arms Trade Treaty which would prohibit arms exports to those likely to use them to violate international human rights and humanitarian law.

For a full copy of the report, *Sudan: Arming the perpetrators of grave abuses in Darfur*, please see: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf541392004>

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