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Clinton must reveal final recipient of military cargo

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command this afternoon insisted that a cargo of weapons with explosives on the ship MV Schippersgracht's en route to Port Said would not be off-loaded in any Egyptian port.

The statement came after Amnesty International raised concerns earlier today that if the weapons ended up in Egypt there was a substantial risk they would be used by security forces to commit serious human rights violations.

The US authorities did confirm that the Dutch ship is carrying US military cargo. But the US refused to confirm the final destination or recipient of the weapons, citing security reasons, nor did they give assurances the cargo would not be end up in a country where the weapons are likely to be used to commit gross human rights violations.

This episode is a clear example of the urgent need for the establishment and implementation of an effective global Arms Trade Treaty, so that there can be transparency in arms transfers and rules to ensure that arms are not transferred from any country to forces who pose a substantial risk of using them to commit gross human rights violations.

Amnesty International is urging US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to clarify who is the final recipient of the latest cargo and give an assurance that this and other US military cargoes are not going to any country where the recipients are likely to use the weapons to commit or facilitate serious violations of human rights. The organization also calls on Secretary Clinton to stop funding Egypt's weapons purchases with US military aid in all cases where there is a substantial risk those weapons would be used for serious violations of human rights.

Between 11 December 2011 and 5 February 2012, the Egyptian Procurement Office (EPO) of the Armament Authority, Ministry of Defense shipped a total of 349 tons of military and dual use equipment with a value of at least USD\$35 million supplied on seven US-flagged cargo ships, which are managed by American President Lines Maritime Ltd.

Equipment on these seven cargo ships included military spare parts and components for electronic equipment, tactical and support vehicles, tanker vehicles, armoured vehicles and tanks, spare parts for AH-64 Apache, H-3 and SH-2G(E) helicopters.