

## Stopping the Pain Merchants

Manufacturing, trading and promoting equipment which is used to torture people is a money-making business.

Across the world, companies and individuals send equipment they say is designed for security or crime control purposes into the hands of government security personnel who often use them to commit human rights abuses.

In the report *The Pain Merchants*, Amnesty International outlines the measures needed to bring this vile trade to a halt. These include a ban on all equipment whose primary use is to commit human rights violations such as torture; a suspension on the manufacture and use of any equipment which might be used for human rights abuse; and a prohibition on the transfer and use of such equipment.

Last year, Amnesty International recorded torture in more than 100 countries. If there were tighter controls on the trade in security equipment and governments of the world had the political will to stop torture, this number would fall.

For further information, see *The Pain Merchants* [report](#) and [press release](#).

### Take action!

The European Union is proposing a new regulation which, if implemented, would ban some torture equipment and control the sale of others. This regulation is currently stuck at committee stage.

You can help by urging the Italian and Irish foreign ministers to use their country's Presidency of the EU to strengthen, adopt and implement the draft regulation, and to send a message to the world that the pain merchants can and must be stopped. (Italy holds the EU Presidency until the end of 2003; Ireland takes over for six months as of 1 January 2004)

You can base your e-mails, faxes and letters on the sample text below.

*Dear Ministers*

*As part of its commitment to eradicate torture, the European Commission has taken the positive step of drafting a Trade Regulation.*

*If adopted by the European Council of Ministers, the Council Regulation concerning trade in certain equipment and products which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment would ban the export of equipment that has no other use than torture (including electro-shock stun belts, thumbcuffs and leg cuffs) from member states to outside the European Union.*

*It would also strictly control the export of equipment that may have a legitimate policing function but can easily lend itself to torture, such as tear gas, as well as some items that AI wants suspended pending independent testing, such as electro-shock stun weapons and pepper spray.*

*There are still companies within the Member States of the EU that are offering to sell, broker, distribute or manufacture torture equipment or security equipment that can be easily misused for torture; further companies involved in such trade will be included in the EU's borders once the ten Acceding States join the EU in May 2004.*

*It is crucial that this Trade Regulation is strengthened and implemented as soon as possible, and I am writing to demand that Italy and Ireland use their term as the Presidency of the EU to ensure that the proposed Regulation is adopted by the Council of Ministers without further delay.*



A hooded Brazilian police officer displays an electric shock instrument which he claims to use during torture sessions. This photograph was published as part of an article in a national newspaper in 2001, in which a civil police officer was quoted as saying of this instrument, "The main thing is not to leave any marks... It is efficient and gives us pleasure."

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*The EU has committed itself to eradicating torture and this measure would be the first of its kind in the world. You can take a global leadership role in helping to prevent torture by properly controlling a wide range of security equipment.*

*Yours sincerely*

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\* If you write by e-mail, please send us a copy of your letter at [cc.appeals@amnesty.org](mailto:cc.appeals@amnesty.org).