

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE**

AI Index: PRE 01/071/2012
09 February 2012

Darfur: New weapons from China and Russia fuelling conflict

Arms sales from China and Russia are fuelling serious human rights violations in Darfur, Amnesty International said today. These arms transfers highlight the urgent need to strengthen the existing ineffectual UN arms embargo and for governments to agree an effective Arms Trade Treaty.

A briefing, *Sudan: No end to the violence in Darfur*, documents how China, Russia, and Belarus continue to supply weapons and munitions to Sudan despite compelling evidence that the arms will be used against civilians in Darfur. Exports include supplying significant quantities of ammunition, helicopter gunships, attack aircrafts, air-to-ground rockets and armoured vehicles.

An estimated 70,000 people were displaced from eastern Darfur in 2011 in a wave of ethnically targeted attacks against the Zaghawa community by Sudanese government forces and militias.

“China and Russia are selling arms to the Government of Sudan in the full knowledge that many of them are likely to end up being used to commit human rights violations in Darfur,” said Brian Wood an expert on military and policing for Amnesty International.

“The Darfur conflict is sustained by the constant flow of weapons from abroad. To help prevent further serious violations of human rights, all international arms transfers to Sudan should be immediately suspended and the UN arms embargo extended to the whole country.”

Next week, at the UN in New York, the Security Council will again consider the existing Sudan sanctions. Governments will also resume crucial talks on a future Arms Trade Treaty. An effective treaty would compel governments to stop transfers where there is a substantial risk the arms will be used to commit or facilitate serious human rights violations or war crimes.

“Until governments agree a strong Arms Trade Treaty with specific rules to respect human rights, UN arms embargoes will continue to be flouted and millions of people will continue to suffer the consequences of irresponsible arms transfers, as they do in Darfur,” said Brian Wood.

Arms supplied to the Government of Sudan are used in Darfur both directly by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF); and government-backed militia including the Popular Defence Force (PDF). The PDF formally commanded and equipped by SAF operate alongside them, including by being deployed on SAF vehicles.

Chinese-manufactured small arms ammunition is being used in Darfur by SAF, other Sudanese security agencies and SAF-backed militia groups.

One attack, on 1 December 2011, at the Zam Zam camp for people displaced by the conflict, saw Sudanese security forces carry out a looting raid during which one man was shot dead and six other people were seriously injured. Witnesses reported finding ammunition following the raid bearing Chinese ‘41’ and ‘71’ manufacture codes, and (20)06 and (20)08 manufacture dates indicating that it was transferred to Darfur after the imposition of the UN arms embargo.

Amnesty International has discovered that 2010-manufactured ammunition with Chinese manufacturing codes have also been observed in Southern Kordofan during 2011.

2011 fighting in eastern Darfur saw a repeated pattern of aerial attacks on both military and civilian targets using SAF

Sukhoi-25 ground-attack aircraft, Mi-24 helicopter gunships, and Antonov transport aircraft used as rudimentary but effective bombers.

Amnesty International has found that Sudan received 36 new Mi-24 helicopter gunships between 2007 and 2009. The continual replacement of Mi-24s by the Russian Federation makes it possible for attacks in Darfur to continue.

A photograph taken at St Petersburg airport in the Russian Federation in May 2011 shows a new Mi-24P helicopter gunship painted in SAF markings apparently awaiting export to Sudan.

Amnesty International has obtained evidence of the use of air-to-ground rockets in several SAF airstrikes during 2011, both attacks in Darfur, and elsewhere in Sudan. These rockets have been manufactured in a number of former Soviet Union countries and are consistent with the weapons suites of Mi-24 helicopter gunships and Su-25 ground attack aircraft.

Sudan has continued to import a significant number of armoured vehicles from Belarus and the Russian Federation. Amnesty International has documented the use of both BTR-80A armoured vehicles and multiple-rocket launchers mounted on Land Cruiser-type vehicles in SAF and SAF/PDF operations in eastern Darfur in the first half of 2011.

Notes to editors:

Amnesty International experts are available for interview in Hong Kong, Johannesburg, London and New York.

To request a copy of the report, images of the arms found in eastern Darfur or an interview please contact:

Tom Mackey

Amnesty International Press Office

+44 207 413 55 66 tom.mackey@amnesty.org @amnestypress

Amnesty International is calling on the UN Security Council to:

- Immediately expand the current UN arms embargo to cover the whole of Sudan to stop military and related supplies reaching all parties to the conflict in Darfur. This embargo should continue to be monitored by an adequately resourced UN Panel of Experts which reports regularly to the Security Council's Sanctions Committee. The Panel of Experts should carry out investigations internationally and should regularly monitor the main ports of entry to Sudan to help ensure that the embargo is respected;
- Demand that the government of Sudan complies with the existing UN arms embargo on Darfur, including by stopping all offensive military flights and seeking prior authorization from the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee to move military equipment and supplies into Darfur.

Amnesty International is calling on governments to deliver an effective Arms Trade Treaty that includes:

- strong human rights parameters to prevent an arms transfer of conventional arms if there is a substantial risk that those arms are likely to be used for serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law
- a comprehensive scope to include all weaponry, munitions, armaments and other equipment used for military and law enforcement operations; and,
- robust standards for implementation and enforcement including national authorization and licensing systems.