

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

AI Index: IOR 30/002/2002 (Public)
News Service No: 103
19 June 2002

Secretary General Irene Khan's letter to companies on controlling the arms trade.

Companies around the world have often pointed out the proliferation and misuse of small arms as one of the reasons that contribute to the instability around the world. To protect their staff, families and property, these companies engage private or state security forces, some of which have caused human rights violations.

Amnesty International says it is in the interest of corporations which believe in corporate social responsibility, to join international efforts to halt the unregulated trade in illicit arms. To this end, AI Secretary General Irene Khan calls upon companies involved in the UN Global Compact to help promote (a) the creation of professional law enforcement capacities fully consistent with international human rights standards and subject to oversight and accountability; and (b) an international system of restraint and responsibility in the transfer of arms, based upon the political values of human rights and the international rule of law. The latter requires the adoption of a set of binding principles based upon existing international law regarding the international transfer of arms, initially by the most powerful states, the Group of Eight. This binding agreement would provide much-needed strength to the Programme of Action adopted by the UN Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons held in July 2001.

For a copy of the letter: http://web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/ec_campaigns_g8#letter

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>