

DR Congo: Arms supplies fuelling unlawful killings and rape Amnesty International 12 June 2012

Political leaders must act immediately and halt arms supplies to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where they continue to fuel unlawful killings, rape, looting and abductions, Amnesty International said in a new report published today.

The report, *'If you resist, we'll shoot you'*, highlights how Congolese security forces and armed groups alike are able to commit serious human rights violations because of the ease of which weapons and ammunition are available.

"The situation in the DRC demonstrates the urgent need for governments around the world to agree on a comprehensive Arms Trade Treaty when final negotiations take place at the UN in July," said Paule Rigaud, Deputy Programme Director for Africa at Amnesty International.

Amnesty International's report shows how fundamental flaws in the Congolese security apparatus allow the persistent misuse and diversion of weapons and ammunition which in turn pave the way to ongoing serious human rights and humanitarian law violations and abuses by the armed forces and armed groups.

"Until human rights safeguards are in place, states should end those transfers of military equipment to countries, like the DRC, where there is a substantial risk such supplies will be used to commit or to facilitate serious human rights violations and attacks against civilians," said Paule Rigaud, Amnesty International's Deputy Africa Programme Director.

(...)

In the majority of cases examined transfers have been allowed by supplier states in spite of the substantial risk the weapons are likely to be used for serious human rights abuses or war crimes in the DRC.

In addition to strengthening the existing arms embargo to the DRC, political leaders must agree to a strong Arms Trade Treaty.

Amnesty International is calling for an Arms Trade Treaty that requires supplying states to undertake a rigorous case-by-case risk assessment of each proposed arms transfer.

States must determine if there is a substantial risk that the arms are likely to be used by the intended recipient to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Where the risk is substantial the supplying state must stop the transfer until the risk is removed and safeguards are in place.

"With final negotiations for the Arms Trade Treaty less than three weeks away, governments have a historic opportunity to ensure this happens," said Paule Rigaud.

(...)

Arms transfers to Government forces also sustain more human rights violations, including mass rape and other acts of sexual violence. Between 31 December 2010 and 1 January 2011, FARDC soldiers attacked the village of Bushani in North Kivu province. The soldiers raped nearly 50 women – aged 16 to 65 – firing gunshots in the air and threatening them with death if they resisted.

Some of the ammunition cartridges subsequently found at the scene were manufactured in China.

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“It is long overdue for those countries supplying weapons to the DRC to carry out strict risk assessments. This would avoid the flow of arms supplies being used by all sides to commit crimes under international law,” said Paule Rigaud. **Read the [full article](#) . Read the related report,**

[‘If you resist, we’ll shoot you’](#)

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