

**DR Congo: Arms supplies fuelling unlawful killings and rape**  
**By Amnesty International**  
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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 with 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.

In recent years, a range of weapons, munitions, and related equipment has been supplied to the DRC's government, including small arms, ammunition, tear gas, armoured vehicles, artillery guns and mortars.

The main arms suppliers to the DRC include China, Egypt, France, South Africa, Ukraine and USA.

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 Amnesty International's Deputy Programme Director for Africa, Paule Rigaud.

Senior DRC Armed Forces (FARDC) officials often sell or give weapons to armed groups, including those they are fighting against. Armed groups also frequently obtain weapons and ammunition left behind when FARDC units flee combat zones.

Following waves of troop defections in May, the FARDC entrusted a colonel with a truck full of ammunition and tens of thousands of dollars for supplies. He then deserted to join a new armed group, taking the weapons and money with him.

As usual civilians bear the horrific cost of such lack of control, diversion of weapons and impunity.

In October 2008, the National Congress for the Defence of the People (Congrès national pour la défense du Peuple, CNDP) attacked the town of Kiwanja leaving 150 civilians dead, days after having looted a FARDC military depot in the eastern town of Rumangabo, seizing large quantities of weapons. Troops went from house to house, dragging young men out before stabbing them to death or shooting them in the head or upper chest.

Laurent Nkunda, CNDP leader at the time, proudly declared during an interview with Amnesty International in 2008: "I've taken Rumangabo two times. We can't even count the number of weapons we captured at Rumangabo, there were so many.

"After the first time, the FARDC filled it up again, with arms of all calibres: anti-aircraft, anti-tank guns. It's the government that gave them to me. I would like to say thank you to China, for giving the FARDC all these weapons."

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.

The problem is not only manifest in eastern DRC. Amnesty International along with other organizations also documented serious human rights violations committed by the Congolese security forces, notably the Republican Guard, in the capital Kinshasa before and after the Presidential and Legislative elections of November 2011, including unlawful killings, torture and arbitrary arrests.

"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.

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