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## **UN Panel Traces Gun - Running Into West Africa**

By REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - A U.N. panel tracing gun-running to West Africa said thousands of automatic rifles, hand grenades and mines from Serbia have reached Liberia in violation of U.N. Security Council sanctions.

In addition, the report on Monday by an independent panel appointed by the council, said it suspected that preparations were underway for another shipment of 50 tons of Serbian military equipment to Liberia via Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The main arms deliveries that reached Liberia included automatic rifles, hand grenades and mines as well as missile launchers, machine guns, pistols and millions of rounds of ammunition. They were delivered between June and August 2002 under a false end-user certificate that claimed the weapons were going to Nigeria, the panel said.

The arms were brokered by a Belgrade-based company called Temex. The Moldovan company Aerocom and the Belgian affiliate of Ducor World Airlines transported the weapons to Liberia, and freight-forwarding agent Interjug AS provided the paperwork at Belgrade Airport, the panel said.

According to the report, Slobodan Tesic, an executive of Temex, whom the panel called the "chief sanctions buster," traveled to Liberia on a charter flight with a Serbian business partner, Orhan Dragas, and another Serbian businessman, Aleksic Jovan, of the company Aviogenex.

Tesic has denied ever visiting Liberia but the panel traced his registration at hotels in Monrovia, with the help of Serbian authorities, the report said.

A Lockheed aircraft was chartered from Ducor World Airlines. The chief executive of Ducor, Duane Egli, told the panel his crew was physically threatened at Belgrade Airport and forced to fly to Liberia, the report said.

The panel said it was concerned that further weapons shipments to Liberia via Democratic Republic of Congo from Belgrade were are planned. It said the proposed shipment included the same types of weapons as the 2002 shipments to Liberia and involved Temex, Ducor World Airlines and Interjug.

The Security Council two years ago put an arms embargo, a ban on diamond exports and a travel ban on Liberian President Charles Taylor and his top associates for fueling civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone through a guns-for-gems trade.

On Tuesday, it decided to renew the sanctions for another year and add embargoes on timber exports.

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