
Amnesty International
LOCAL GROUP
CAMPAIGN UPDATE



Stop Torture Campaign / September 2015

Call on the UK to stop the trade in torture equipment

Background

As a result of concerns raised by Amnesty International and others, the EU introduced specific laws to restrict the trade in torture equipment in 2005. But there are loopholes that mean certain types of trade or certain categories of torture equipment continue to be traded. The EU is currently reviewing the regulation banning the trade in equipment used for torture and the death penalty and we have a unique opportunity to close these loopholes.

Why now?

EU – MEP review process reaching its conclusion

The European Union (EU) is currently reviewing the law which prohibits trade in items used for torture. Many of you have written or met with your MEPs. It is now expected that MEPs will finalise recommendations for this review by the end of November 2015, so if you haven't written or met with your MEP, there is still time (please see "further actions" section). Now the campaign will start to shift focus to the individual European governments, including the UK Government, who will now also have to agree to the changes proposed by the European Parliament. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is responsible for this area of work. Following the decisions by the European Parliament in November, there will be a period of negotiation between EU Council of Ministers (UK and other EU member states), the EU Commission and MEPs and only when agreement is reached between the three institutions, the review of the EU Torture trade law will be complete.

Now is the time to call on the UK government to support our call to close the loopholes that allow people in the EU to profit from the trade in torture equipment.

Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) Arms Fair

From the 15-18 September the biennial DSEI Arms Fair returns to London. At past DSEI Fairs, Amnesty has uncovered torture equipment being illegally traded. At the last DSEI Fair in 2013 for example, Amnesty uncovered two companies advertising a variety of torture equipment, including electric shock batons and leg irons. Previous fairs have all seen a variety of illegal weapons including cluster bombs, leg irons and electric shock weapons advertised for sale.

A key loophole we wish to see closed in these EU torture trade laws relates to the ease by which companies can continue to promote market and advertise tools of torture at arms fairs within the EU.

The DSEI Arms Fair therefore gives us a great opportunity to pressure the UK Government to support our calls to close the loopholes in these EU tools of torture laws and to stop torture equipment being traded in the UK at DSEI and other UK defence and security exhibitions.

Online action - in September we will launch a new online action targeting the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. You will find this action at www.amnesty.org.uk/armsfair

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What are we calling for?

We have identified three main areas where the regulation needs to be strengthened:

1) Currently you can trade in equipment that is banned under the regulation as long as the equipment doesn't physically enter the EU. So sitting in Paris or Berlin and arranging the sale of items from outside the EU is currently not prohibited. This type of trading activity is known as brokering and is often a key way such goods are traded. We want to ensure no EU Company is complicit in the trade in torture equipment. In the same way as the arms trade is currently regulated, we are calling for effective controls on companies brokering deals that could result in trade in goods banned under the regulation. We need to close this loophole.

2) Although many items are banned from sale, companies are still able to promote and market this equipment in the EU. Whether this is through commercial marketing, exhibitions or trade fairs, companies must not be able to promote the tools of torture in EU member states.

3) Attached to the main body of the regulation are lists and categories of equipment that are subject to the legislation. These lists are comprised of two types of equipment:

- Firstly, there is a list of totally "prohibited" items, things that can only be used to commit acts of torture or capital punishment so are subject to a blanket ban;
- Secondly, there is a list of "controlled" equipment, which comprises of items that sometimes have legitimate uses, but can also clearly be used to commit or facilitate acts of torture, for example drugs that can be used in the death penalty but also have legitimate medical uses. Trade in items on the "controlled" list are banned when they risk being used for torture.

New equipment is coming into the market all the time and the existing lists may not be able to capture all types of equipment being used for torture. If we are to stop the trade in torture equipment then the EU must introduce a "catch all" clause. This would allow an additional safeguard to enable Member States to immediately prohibit the trade in goods where it is clear that the items are likely being used for torture, ill-treatment or the death penalty, even if they are not specifically listed under the regulation. In other similar areas, such as the trade in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, or for arms embargoes, similar "catch all" clauses are already in place. We want to bring the EU laws on torture goods in line with these existing measures.

ACTION: Write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and skill

Please write to Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. You can use the template letter below or use it to write your own letter and send it to;

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET

Email: javidmpstcorrespondence@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Fax: 020 7215 5468

Please let us know you have done this and send us any responses you receive to Community Organiser (local group), Amnesty International, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA. Or you can e-mail them to activism@amnesty.org.uk

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TEMPLATE LETTER

Dear Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills,

I am writing to urge you to close the loopholes in the EU laws that prohibit the trade in torture equipment. I ask you to support Amnesty International's calls to strengthen this legislation and to close all loopholes that allow the trade in the tools of torture. The UK has been a world leader in preventing the trade of equipment used for torture across the world and I urge you to continue this tradition at the EU level.

Specifically I call on you to use your influence to ensure the final text of the amended legislation:

1. introduces effective controls on companies brokering deals potentially resulting in the trade in goods covered by the regulation;
2. Prohibits companies promoting the sale of equipment in their commercial marketing, as well as through exhibition and trade fairs in EU countries, that could be used by law enforcement officials for torture or ill-treatment;
3. Introduces a "catch all" clause allowing all Member States to immediately prohibit the trade in goods where it is clear that the items are likely being used for torture, ill-treatment or the death penalty, even if they are not specifically listed under the regulation.

Furthermore I urge you to ensure that torture equipment is not illegally traded in the UK and that anyone found responsible is held to account.

I look forward to hearing from you on how you are supporting this important work.

Yours sincerely,

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Further actions

- **Take action online** - in September we will launch a new online action targeting the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. You will find this action at www.amnesty.org.uk/armsfair
- **Write to your MEPs** – if you haven't done so already. Please see the October 2014 mailing for details http://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/october_cab_2.pdf
- **Read the report** - *Europe: Grasping the nettle: Ending Europe's trade in execution and torture technology* <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur01/1632/2015/en/>

Stop Torture campaign materials

Please see below full list of general resources for Stop Torture Campaign.

You can order them calling **01788 545553** and quote the relevant product codes.

- Stop Torture Campaign Pack: STOPT01
- Stop Torture Campaign Pack Letter to go with STOPT01 item: STOPT02
- Claudia Medina Action Card: STOPT03
- Ali Aarrass Action Card: STOPT04
- Dilorom Abdukadirova Action Card: STOPT07
- Claudia Medina Casesheet: STOPT08
- Ali Aarrass Casesheet: STOPT09
- Moses Akatugba Casesheet: STOPT10
- Alfreda Disbarro Casesheet: STOPT11
- Dilorom Abdukadirova Casesheet: STOPT12
- Stop Torture Stickers Sheet (15 stickers per sheet): STOPT13
- Stop Torture Poster (A2): STOPT14
- Stop Torture A5 Leaflet: STOPT15
- Stop Torture A3 Placard: STOPT16
- EU Tools of Torture Flashcards: STOPT17
- 'Don't turn a blind eye to torture' Stickers Sheet (4 stickers per sheet): STOPT18

For more information on the campaign, including campaign resources, current online actions, research reports and videos see: www.amnesty.org.uk/torture

Local group's monthly mailing can be downloaded from: www.amnesty.org.uk/localgroups