

CONTROL ARMS RESOURCE SHEET 2

Case study 1

THE CASE OF MATEO LOPÉZ

WHAT HAPPENED

Mateo Lopéz is a trade union member in Guatemala. He and his sister-in-law were walking to get a bus to a trade union meeting in October 2010. They saw a motorbike carrying two men coming towards them at high speed.

The passenger was holding a gun and opened fire. Lopéz fell to the ground and then was repeatedly shot. The attackers fled the scene.

After being discharged from hospital Lopéz returned home, but is at risk of further attacks. There have been no developments in the investigations in the case and no one has been arrested.

BACKGROUND

A week before being shot, Lopéz had given a speech at a public event to mark the killing of an activist, Víctor Gálvez.

According to official trade union reports, 16 trade unionists were killed in Guatemala in 2009.

THE FACTS

- Guatemala has been flooded with firearms for years. In 2009 the Guatemalan Congress passed a comprehensive law on arms control. This has had little impact so far.
- Guatemala has a very high level of intentional homicide – 45.2 homicides per 100,000 people, compared to the world average of 7.6.
- It is estimated that there are between 800,000 and 1.5 million illegal firearms in circulation.
- The import of firearms into Guatemala is disproportionate to the size of its population and armed forces.
- From 2000-2009, Guatemala imported \$26.6 million-worth of **military** pistols and revolvers.
- In the same period Guatemala imported \$13.5 million-worth of **civilian** firearms.

GLOSSARY

Trade union: an organisation of workers who have come together to achieve common goals such as better working conditions

Activist: someone who works to support a particular cause

Intentional homicide: when someone kills another person on purpose

Civilian: a person who is not in the military

GNI per capita: average income per head



REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

Population: 14.3 million

Capital: Guatemala City

Major languages: Spanish, over 20 indigenous languages

Major religion: Christianity, indigenous Mayan beliefs

Life expectancy: 68 years (men), 75 years (women)

Main exports: Coffee, sugar, bananas, fruits and vegetables, meat, petroleum, cardamom

GNI per capita: US \$2,620 (World Bank, 2009)



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Case study 2

THE MAGUINDANAO MASSACRE

WHAT HAPPENED

A politician in the Philippines was preparing to stand for local elections. Members of his family, some of his supporters and 37 journalists went in a convoy of seven vehicles to register with the election office.

On the way to the provincial capital, the vehicles were surrounded by 100 heavily armed men. The vehicles and the occupants were taken to a nearby hill. At least 63 people in the convoy were shot and their bodies thrown into mass graves.

Witnesses said that a political opponent was seen shooting into the convoy.

This massacre was one of the deadliest in the recent history of the Philippines and was the world's largest ever single attack on journalists. It was widely condemned in the country and abroad. The government declared a state of emergency in the area.

BACKGROUND

The Philippines has a long record of human rights abuses. Private armies have spread across the country in recent years.

THE FACTS

- Between 2005 and 2009 the Philippines imported infantry weapons and non-military arms worth \$109.5 million from 29 countries.
- During the same period, the Philippines imported \$30.9 million-worth of military weapons in addition to revolvers and pistols.
- The United States is the biggest provider of military and non-military arms and ammunitions to the Philippines.

GLOSSARY

State of emergency: when a government creates special rules to deal with an extremely dangerous or difficult situation, often limiting people's freedoms

Infantry weapons: weapons that soldiers use

Non-military arms: weapons used by people who are not soldiers

GNI per capita: average income per head



PHILIPPINES

Full name: Republic of the Philippines

Population: 93.6 million (UN, 2010)

Capital: Manila

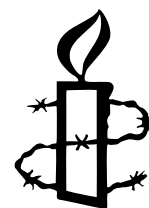
Major languages: Filipino, English (both official)

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 71 years (men), 75 years (women)

Main exports: Electrical machinery, clothing, food and live animals, chemicals, timber products

GNI per capita: US \$1,790 (World Bank, 2009)



CONTROL ARMS RESOURCE SHEET 2

Case study 3

LIBYAN POLITICAL PROTESTERS

WHAT HAPPENED

In February 2011 Libyans in Benghazi had a peaceful demonstration to protest about the arrest of two activists. The police tried to stop the protests by force and many protesters and bystanders were killed. The protests then became violent. Soldiers were brought in. They fired live ammunition into the crowds without making any effort to avoid hurting people.

This event made a lot of the public very angry and protests spread across the country leading to widespread armed conflict.

The armoured vehicles used by the Libyan soldiers and police to crush the protests looked exactly like the crowd control vehicles made by a British company. This company had recently been at arms fairs in Libya trying to sell their vehicles to government officials.

BACKGROUND

Companies in the UK that make weapons cannot sell them to other countries unless they get an arms export licence from the UK government. The government should not give a licence if there is a risk that the weapons might be used to commit human rights abuses.

In 2008 a committee of Members of Parliament said they had serious 'misgivings' and concerns about the UK allowing armoured vehicles and water cannon to be exported to Libya. There was a risk they could be used for internal repression.

THE FACTS*

- The UK is one of several countries supplying arms to Libya.
- In 2010, the UK has granted licences worth £452,762 for the export of armoured vehicles to Libya.
- Licences worth £75,015, in 2010 have also been granted for the export of ammunition to Libya.

GLOSSARY

Benghazi: Libya's second largest city

Arms export licence: permission from a government for weapons and ammunition made in that country to be sold to another country

Arms fair: where manufacturers show the weapons they make to military representatives and government officials, who might want to buy them

Internal repression: when a government uses force to stop people peacefully expressing their views

GNI per capita: average income per head



LIBYA

Population: 6.5 million

Capital: Tripoli

Major language: Arabic

Major religion: Islam

Life expectancy: 73 years (men), 78 years (women)

Main exports: Crude oil, petroleum products, natural gas

GNI per capita: US \$12,020 (World Bank, 2009)

*Reference – Amnesty International Report 2011: *Arms transfers to the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons for an effective ATT*