
amnesty international

Nepal

Military assistance contributing to grave human rights violations

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Summary

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This report documents how military aid and arms supplies to Nepal from countries such as the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and India have facilitated the killing, torture and "disappearance" of thousands of civilians.

Amnesty International is calling on these governments and others - including Belgium and South Africa which have recently supplied military assistance and France which supplies crucial components for helicopters assembled and delivered by India - to suspend all transfers of arms and related logistical and security supplies to Nepal until the Nepalese government takes clear steps to halt human rights violations and bring those responsible to justice.

The report focuses particular attention on military aid, arms transfers and training provided by the US, UK and India during the nine-year armed conflict between the security forces and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). It also examines the supply of arms from private companies and the role governments play in providing export licenses for such sales.

Despite overwhelming evidence that such military assistance has been used for the killing and abduction of civilians by both sides in the conflict, it has only recently been suspended and in some cases still continues.

The report's main findings include:

- The transfer of 20,000 M16 assault rifles to Nepalese security forces by the US with over US\$ 29 million in military funding since 2001;
- The export of 25,000 INSAS 5.56mm infantry rifles to Nepal from India, despite evidence of their use in grave human rights violations such as the murder of 19 unarmed Maoist suspects by Nepalese security forces in August 2003;
- The supply by India of Lancer helicopter gun-ships, produced under license from the French company Eurocopter, which have been used by the Royal Nepalese Army to attack mass meetings called by the Maoists in villages often resulting in the killing of civilians;
- Provision by the UK of Islander Short Take Off and Landing aircraft for logistical purposes but with no system of end use monitoring to ensure that these planes are not later fitted with armaments;

- The granting in 2001 of UK export licences for various shipments of small arms including 6,780 assault rifles, in contravention of the terms of the European Union (EU) Code of Conduct on Arms Exports;
- Inconsistent application of the EU Code of Conduct for Arms Exports with the sale by Belgium of 5,000 Minimi Light Machine Guns to Nepal in 2002, despite an earlier German refusal to supply similar weapons on human rights grounds;
- Training provided to Nepalese security forces by the US, UK and India with unclear or non-existent vetting procedures to screen out those reasonably suspected of gross human violations;
- The supply of military communications equipment to Nepal from South Africa in 2003;
- A failure by the United Nations (UN) to independently vet members of the Nepalese security forces sent to take part in UN peacekeeping missions despite reports that the Government rewards soldiers who were suspected of involvement in extrajudicial executions with UN deployments.

Amnesty International is calling for the suspension of all arms supplies and military assistance to Nepal until the government takes clear steps to halt human rights violations and bring those responsible to justice. Specifically, the Government of Nepal must implement the recommendations of the UN Commission on Human Rights as contained in its April 2005 resolution. These include an end to arbitrary arrests and "disappearances", clarification of the fate of all "disappeared", the amendment of security legislation, the institution of prompt, independent and impartial investigations of all alleged violations of human rights and the prosecution of all those reasonably suspected of responsibility.

KEYWORDS:

This report summarizes a 26-page document (13,931 words): Nepal, Military assistance contributing to grave human rights violations (AI Index: ASA 31/047/2005) issued by Amnesty International in June 2005. Anyone wishing further details or to take action on this issue should consult the full document. An extensive range of our materials on this and other subjects is available at <http://www.amnesty.org> and Amnesty International news releases can be received by email: http://www.amnesty.org/email/email_updates.html

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