

EU: Amnesty discovers gruesome illegal torture equipment for sale in Paris

22 November 2017, 11:49 UTC

Amnesty International researchers have discovered illegal torture equipment including spiked batons, spiked electric shock riot forks, electric shock vests and heavy leg irons for sale by Chinese companies at Milipol, a military and police trade fair taking place this week in Paris.

The import and export of torture equipment has been banned in the EU since 2006. In 2016, the EU also banned the promotion and display of this equipment at trade fairs.

Some of the items identified by Amnesty International were listed in catalogues present at Milipol, while others were found on display, raising questions as to how they were imported into the EU.

“ France is providing a marketplace for torturers ”

Ara Marcen Naval, Arms Control Adviser

“Brutal implements of torture like spiked batons and weighted leg irons were supposed to have been banned for good in the EU. So why are they for sale in Paris today?” said Ara Marcen Naval, Adviser on Arms Control at Amnesty International.

“By failing to enforce the law, France is providing a marketplace for torturers. Milipol is the first real test of the new EU rules on torture tools, so it is alarming to see those rules already being flouted, less than a year after they came into force. ”

In September the EU-led “Global Alliance for Torture Free Trade” was launched by the EU Trade Commissioner, Cecilia Malström at the UN General Assembly in New York. One of the key purposes of the Global Alliance, which France has joined, is the promotion of legislation pioneered in the EU.

“ If EU states cannot keep their own houses in order, how are they going to persuade other countries to stamp out this cruel trade? ”

Ara Marcen Naval

“The EU has led the way in banning torture equipment, yet today we have seen tools of torture proudly on display in the heart of Paris. If EU states cannot keep their own houses in order by properly implementing the regulation in the EU, how are they going to persuade other countries to stamp out this cruel trade?” said Ara Marcen Naval.

“We are urging the French authorities to urgently investigate the import of these illicit items. They must put measures in place to robustly implement the EU regulation so that no person or company can continue to make a profit from this trade in implements designed to cause human suffering.”

Background

Full list of equipment seen by Amnesty International Researchers at Milipol:

Electric Ankle cuffs, spiked electric shock riot fork, electric shock vest, electric shock designed for the thigh, electric shock shield that might be spiked, weighted leg irons, spiked arm guard, heavy leg irons.

Milipol is one of Europe's biggest security trade fairs and takes place in Paris from 21-24 November 2017.

Amnesty International raised its findings with Milipol's exhibit control office. Representatives of the office said they attempt to monitor the exhibition for such prohibited items. Amnesty International considers that Milipol needs to significantly increase the resources it dedicates to this task.

'Tools of torture' refers to a wide range of security and law enforcement equipment which could be used to torture, ill-treat or execute people. For background see Amnesty International and Omega's September briefing: [Tackling The Trade In Tools Of Torture And Execution Technologies](#)

EU governments introduced Regulation (EC) 1236/2005 (the Regulation) which concerns the “trade in goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment!”. It came into effect on 31 July 2006.

The lists of prohibited and controlled goods are set out in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 775/2014 and were amended by Regulation (EU) 2016/2134 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Regulation (EU) 2016/2134 was adopted on 16 December 2016 and strengthens the 2005 text.

Consolidated version: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1497343656144&uri=CELEX:02005R1236-20170317>

There is an explicit ban on advertising prohibited (Annex II) equipment at trade fairs and exhibitions in the EU, and a further ban on purchasing advertising space/time (including online) for such goods.

 EU: Time to eradicate the torture trade

Topics

FRANCE ARMS TRADE