

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

1 March 2017

## UN: Time to rein in the global trade in tools of torture

### *Panel discussion at UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 3 March*

Governments must close loopholes in international trade law that allow the sale and export of equipment used to torture detainees, Amnesty International and the Omega Research Foundation will urge at a panel event at the UN Human Rights Council on 3 March.

Every year law enforcement officials in many countries around the world use abusive equipment – such as electric shock devices, spiked batons, and leg irons – to subject detainees to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. In addition, equipment with a legitimate law enforcement use, like ordinary handcuffs, tear gas or Tasers, are routinely and systematically abused.

“After years of campaigning by Amnesty International and Omega, the European Union did the right thing by introducing robust restrictions on the sale, brokering and promotion of tools of torture,” said Patrick Wilcken, Researcher on Arms Control and Human Rights at Amnesty International.

“It is high time the international community followed suit, bringing us a step closer to eradicating this shameful trade that profits from human suffering.”

“Our research has uncovered the commercial marketing of inherently abusive law enforcement equipment throughout the world, including South African and US electric shock belts, German electric stun cuffs; Chinese spiked batons and spiked shields or Russian handcuffs that can be bolted to prison walls,” said Dr Michael Crowley, Research Associate with the Omega Research Foundation.

“The trade in tools of torture is international and is currently out of control. It is a global problem, requiring a global response.”

Accompanied by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the organizations will outline five key principles towards the adoption of national trade laws to curtail trade in tools of torture.

**WHAT:** Panel discussion, "*Controlling the use and trade in the tools of torture and repression: towards an international torture trade law.*"

**WHO:**

- Chaired by H.E. Ambassador Carsten Staur (Denmark)
- Nils Melzer, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Michael Crowley, Research Associate, Omega Research Foundation
- Patrick Wilcken, Researcher on Arms Control and Human Rights at Amnesty International
- Avani Singh, Attorney, Constitutional Litigation Unit, Legal Resources Centre, South Africa

**WHERE:** Palais des Nations, Geneva, Room XXI

**WHEN:** Friday 3 March, 2017 15:00-16:00.

Public Document

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