

OMEGA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

EXPOSING AND PREVENTING TORTURE AND
HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES



Omega Research Foundation

ABOUT US

Established in 1990, the Omega Research Foundation (Omega) is a UK-based research organisation working to protect human rights and prevent grave human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment.

Omega has extensive expertise on MSP weapons, munitions, equipment, and techniques, encompassing small arms and light weapons, large weapon systems, surveillance technologies, drones, less lethal weapons, and law enforcement equipment and vehicles.

Violence and the threat of violence prevents ordinary people from exercising their full range of human rights. Human rights and international humanitarian law violations, including torture, are frequently committed or facilitated by state officials using specialist military, security, and policing (MSP) weapons, equipment, and techniques.

OUR AIMS

Omega works to prevent human rights and international humanitarian law violations, like torture and other ill-treatment, by:



Strengthening controls on the trade in weapons that are frequently used for oppression and human rights violations, such as handcuffs, and tear gas.



Ending the manufacture and trade of inherently abusive weapons, such as batons with metal spikes, which have no lawful use.



Enhancing standards on law enforcement use of force and improving their application.



OUR WORK



For over 30 years, Omega has been conducting open-source investigations. We uncover evidence highlighting loopholes or breaches of trade laws, identify the weapons used in cases of abuse, and work with partners to campaign to improve international regulations and their implementation. By increasing transparency and tightening regulations, our work increases the accountability of governments, companies and individuals trading in or using military, security and police equipment.



Omega maintains a large database on entities involved in the international manufacture and trade in MSP equipment, likely the largest database of its kind. This is enhanced by our archive of company documents and brochures, and our large collection of specialist images. We draw on this database to, for example, track weapons and their supply chain, and document breaches of UN embargoes and illegal transfers. We also regularly respond to queries from journalists and human rights activists, asking for identifications of weapons and equipment that have been used in human rights violations.



We assist, collaborate with, and provide training to partners including a range of partners across the world, and share our findings and expertise with the media, partners, legal professionals, and national, regional, and international human rights experts and bodies, including the United Nations and Council of Europe.

In 2016, and again in 2020, Omega's work helped to strengthen the EU Anti-Torture Regulation, created with Omega's assistance in 2005. In 2020, we worked with the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa and the Council of Europe on regional-level controls. Omega is involved in the ongoing UN process to develop international controls on the trade in tools of torture.

In 2014, Omega's research resulted in the cessation of South Korean shipments of tear gas to the oppressive regime in Bahrain. In 2019, our identification work contributed to the suspension of UK exports of 'crowd control' equipment to Hong Kong.

Omega provides training to improve the ability of human rights monitors to identify misuse of force, particularly to identify those weapons and equipment misused by police and prison officers and to act to prevent further misuse. In 2021, for example, Omega trained federal judges in Mexico on how to effectively investigate and document torture.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

Omega works to expose and control the manufacture and trade in equipment used for repression, hold governments, corporations, and individuals to account, inform and assist officials, policy-makers, journalists, and human rights monitors, and secure justice for survivors of violations. You can help.

We can only continue our work with the generosity of individual supporters and grants from trusts and other human rights funders. Omega will never accept any funding from the industry we research or from companies or organisations that could compromise our independence.

For further information or to donate, visit our website www.omegaresearchfoundation.org, Twitter at [@Omega_RF](https://twitter.com/Omega_RF), Facebook at [@OmegaResearchFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/OmegaResearchFoundation) or email info@omegaresearchfoundation.org

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