
NO ARMS DEALERS IN NOTTINGHAM

A Demonstration against Heckler & Koch

PRESS RELEASE – 2007-07-23

On Tuesday July 24th at 16:00 there will be a peaceful protest at the Nottingham office of multinational arms corporation Heckler & Koch. The aim of this demonstration is to expose the presence of a major arms dealer in Nottingham, to highlight its appalling track record and to call for it to be shut down. This demonstration has been called by Disarm DSEi – a grassroots campaign against the UK's largest arms fair, at which Heckler & Koch will be exhibiting their weapons later this year.

Heckler & Koch is the world's second-largest manufacturer of handguns, assault rifles, submachine guns, machine guns and grenade launchers^[1]. Its UK office is NSAF (Nottingham Small Arms Factory) on Lenton Lane, which is responsible for the company's "international customer sales"^[2]. In a city that has become infamous for gun crime, it is obscene that this company is selling guns to customers around the world.

The small arms industry is inherently unethical. Half a million people are killed by small arms every year, three quarters of whom are civilians^[3]. They are the real weapons of mass destruction, and there are presently millions of Heckler & Koch small arms in use in over 90 countries worldwide^[4].

Heckler & Koch has shipped guns from the UK to warzones such as Bosnia^[5] and Nepal^[6], and has licensed its weapons for production by repressive regimes such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Thailand, Pakistan and Myanmar^[7]. Furthermore it effectively evaded UK and EU export restrictions when these licensees sold H&K weapons on to conflict zones including Indonesia^[8], Sri Lanka^[9] and Sierra Leone^[6]. The company may claim that some of these license agreements have expired, but that didn't prevent Iran from supplying H&K rifles to war-torn Sudan^[7].

Legal loopholes, brokers and gunrunners make it all too easy to evade arms embargoes, as British comedian Mark Thomas demonstrated by arranging a shipment of Heckler & Koch submachine guns to Mugabe's brutal regime in Zimbabwe.^[2] Furthermore, H&K weapons have a very long shelf life and older models are often resold to countries with poor human rights records. This illustrates the unethical and uncontrolled nature of the industry in which Heckler & Koch is proud to operate.

It is companies like Heckler & Koch that make the guns that are smuggled into the UK to be used by gangsters, so it is ironic that the company sells guns to the British police. 60% of small arms end up in the hands of criminal gangs and civilians^[3], prompting a lethal arms race between criminals and police in which the only winners are arms dealers such as Heckler & Koch.

References

1. FAQ, Small Arms Survey (<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/home/FAQ.html#FAQ3>).
2. *Corporate Structure*, Heckler & Koch (<http://www.heckler-koch.de/Structure>).
3. Thomas, Mark (2006), *As Used On The Famous Nelson Mandela*, London: Ebury Press.
4. *Small Arms Survey 2002 – Counting The Human Cost*, Oxford University Press.
5. Abel, Peter, *Manufacturing Trends: Globalising the Source* in Lumpe, Lora (ed.) (2000), *Running Guns: The Global Black Market in Small Arms*, London: Zed Books.
6. *A Catalogue of Failures: G8 Arms Exports and Human Rights Violations* (2003-05-19), Amnesty International (<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engior300032003>).
7. *Out of Control – The loopholes in UK controls on the arms trade* (1998-12), Oxfam GB (http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/conflict_disasters/downloads/control.rtf).
8. Wright, Steve (2001-01), *A Legal Trade In Death*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*.
9. *Undermining Global Security: the European Union's arms exports* (2004-02-01), Amnesty International (<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engact300032004>).

The demo will take place on 2007-07-24 16:00 at Easter Park, Lenton Lane, Nottingham NG7 2PX.

Web: <http://disarmdsei.evey.org/>