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## **Chinese Arms Flowing Into Sudan**

by Carol Van Dam Falk

A new report shows China is a major player in supplying cheap weapons to Sub-Saharan Africa, including conflict zones like the Darfur region of Sudan, a practice that is in violation of United Nations sanctions. Chinese arms sales jumped from only 3 percent from the years 1996-2000 to 25 percent during the years 2006-2010.

The weapons have shown up in a number of UN investigations, according to Pieter Wezeman, chief author of a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

“China has been active as an arms supplier to a number of countries in that region. We counted at least 16 countries that received arms [from China] in the last five years,” Wezeman said.

He said that while Sudan itself is not under a UN embargo for conventional arms, the region of Darfur is, and China supplied Khartoum with a major supply of weapons that were then transported to Darfur, where thousands of innocent civilians have been killed. Wezeman points out several other countries are also supplying arms to Sudan, including Russia and Ukraine.

But unlike other major arms exporters, China is not afraid to challenge UN authorities and routinely refuses to cooperate with UN arms experts.

China was very sensitive about accusations by various UN panels that its weapons were flowing into Sub-Saharan Africa, even if the reports did not specifically blame China for the arms sales. Wezeman said China has repeatedly tried to impede UN investigations, stop publication of reports on arms sales, or tone them down. He said China would go to great lengths to suppress the reports.

“They would try to get other people appointed (to UN panels investigating arms sales) or try to stop publication of the reports.”

China sells its weapons in many other trouble spots around the world such as Pakistan, a U-S ally, but Wezeman said elsewhere, China find it very difficult to sell its weapons.

“Chinese arms have a reputation of being of lesser quality than those being produced in Britain, Europe or the United States. The arms they produce are certainly of the type, the quality and the price that African countries are interested in,” Wezeman said.