

PRESS RELEASE

Coalition of NGOs files criminal complaint against RWM Italia S.p.A. a subsidiary of German Arms Manufacturer Rheinmetall AG and Italian Arms Export Authority

Are arms manufacturer and Italian authorities complicit in deadly Saudi-coalition airstrike in Yemen?

Berlin/Rome/Sana'a, 18 April 2018 – At 03:00am on 8 October 2016 an airstrike allegedly by the Saudi-led military coalition struck the village of Deir Al-Hajari in Northwest Yemen. The airstrike killed a family of six, including the pregnant mother and four children. At the site of the airstrike bomb remnants were found, and a suspension lug manufactured by RWM Italia S.p.A., a subsidiary of the German Arms Manufacturer Rheinmetall AG. To uncover the contributing role of Italian actors in the airstrike through the Italian arms exports, on 17 April 2018 the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights ([ECCHR](#)), together with its Yemen based partner organization [Mwatana Organization for Human Rights](#), and Italian based [Rete Disarmo](#), submitted a criminal complaint to the Italian Public Prosecutor's Office in Rome. The legal intervention calls for an investigation into the criminal liability of Italian authority UAMA that authorizes Italy's armament exports, and of Italian armament manufacturer RWM Italia S.p.A.'s directors for armament exports to members of the Saudi-led military coalition involved in the conflict in Yemen.

All parties to the Yemen conflict have repeatedly violated human rights and the civilian population is facing a widespread humanitarian crisis. Numerous airstrikes by the Saudi-led military coalition have been found by the United Nations to be in violation of international humanitarian law. "The on-going arms exports by European countries further the killing, while corporations like German Rheinmetall AG and its Italian subsidiary RWM Italia S.p.A. benefit from this business. At the same time exporting countries provide humanitarian aid to the very population targeted by these arms. The hypocrisy is stunning, and persists due to a failing implementation of the European legal framework on arms export control in relation to human rights", says ECCHR's Vice Legal Director Miriam Saage-Maaß. "An investigation into the criminal liability for these arms exports and their authorizations is therefore of paramount importance."

Radhya Al-Mutawakel, director of Mwatana Organization for Human Rights, stresses: "The Saudi-led coalition has killed and injured thousands of civilians since 2015, and hits everything in Yemen, schools, hospitals, houses, bridges, factories, etc. It is very sad that Italy is one of the countries that are fueling this war by selling weapons to some members of the Saudi-led coalition."

Francesco Vignarca from Rete Disarmo added: "Despite the reported violations in Yemen, Italy continues to export arms to members of the Saudi-led military coalition. This is contrary to Italian law 185/1990, which prohibits arms exports to countries engaged in armed conflict. Further, it is in contrast with the binding provisions of the EU Common Position on arms export control and the International Arms Trade Treaty."

For more information (case report, video, photos) see [ECCHR/Yemen](#).

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