



ADHRB Files Complaint with OECD against Dae Kwang Chemical Corp

WASHINGTON, DC – December 4, 2013 – On 27 November 2013, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), acting in tandem with [Bahrain Watch](#) and a team of British and American lawyers, filed a [complaint](#) with the South Korean National Contact Point for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) against Dae Kwang Chemical Corp. The complaint alleges that Dae Kwang’s upcoming shipment of 1.6 million tear gas canisters to Bahrain will violate the OECD’s Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises concerning human rights and urges the National Contact Point to condemn the shipment.

In 2011, the Government of Bahrain violently attacked and suppressed nationwide protests calling for greater democracy and a more representative government. Since then, the government has [used](#) tear gas to stifle dissent, often blanketing entire villages with tear gas and endangering the lives of small children and persons with respiratory problems. Security officers have been known to fire tear gas canisters directly into homes, where residents often asphyxiate as the gas cannot disperse. On several occasions, Bahraini security officers have fired tear gas canisters directly at the heads or faces of protesters, resulting in high-velocity and often lethal impacts. To date, at least 39 people have [died](#) as a result of government misuse of tear gas, including several young children and at least one infant.

“The Government of Bahrain has a history of abusing tear gas to violate human rights dating back to the 1990s,” said ADHRB Executive Director Husain Abdulla. “Over the last two and a half years, however, the government campaign has intensified, and almost 40 Bahrainis have lost their lives as a direct result of tear gas use. While the Bahrain government is obviously responsible for their deaths, the multinational companies that arm the government must be held accountable for their complicity.”

The Government of Bahrain’s misuse of tear gas impinges upon the human rights of peaceful assembly and free expression and violates the prohibitions against torture and arbitrarily or extrajudicial killing. The 2011 OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises [states](#) that companies must “seek ways to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts directly linked to their business operations, products, or services...” Dae Kwang has [admitted](#) to supplying the Government of Bahrain with approximately one million canisters of tear gas in the past, and, according to a tender [document](#) leaked by Bahrain Watch in October, is planning to send an additional 1.6 million canisters in the immediate future.

“ADHRB is very concerned that tear gas supplied by Dae Kwang will be used by the Bahrain government to commit human rights violations in Bahrain,” said Abdulla. “South Korea is a party to the OECD and has pledged to uphold not only OECD standards, but also the instruments of international human rights law. We hope that a favorable response from the National Contact Point will pressure the South Korean government to honor its human rights commitments and halt the shipment of tear gas to Bahrain.”