



ADHRB Praises Decision by South Korean Government to Suspend All Tear Gas Exports to Bahrain

WASHINGTON, DC – January 7, 2014 - On Tuesday, January 7, the Government of South Korea announced that it is indefinitely suspending all exports of tear gas to the Kingdom of Bahrain in response to repeated calls from advocacy and human rights groups. Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) joined with other human rights advocates, including Bahrain Watch, to protest the [purchase request](#) made by the Bahrain Ministry of Interior to a South Korean company for 1.6 million units of tear gas due to the Government of Bahrain's history of abuse of these 'non-lethal weapons.' ADHRB applauds the decision by the South Korean government to immediately suspend all shipments of tear gas to the country.

South Korean defense agency spokesman Lee Jung-geun partly attributed the halt in exports to "...people's death due to tear gas and complaints from human rights groups," in addition to the "unstable politics in that country [Bahrain]."

"We are pleased to see that the government of South Korea recognizes the lethal misuse of tear gas against Bahraini citizens and has joined with other responsible countries in banning this weapon's export to Bahrain," said ADHRB Executive Director Husain Abdulla. "We hope that other tear gas producing countries, like South Africa, will take note of what South Korea and others have done, and will not allow their country's exports to terrorize, harm and kill Bahraini civilians."

Evidence of the Government of Bahrain's misuse of tear gas prompting the decision, including its use as a form of collective punishment, have been well documented by the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), [Physicians for Human Rights](#), and the [Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry](#) (BICI) Report. While the Bahrain government claims it uses tear gas merely as a tool for crowd dispersal, its misuse has led to [health complications](#), [serious injury](#), and even [death](#). The security forces in Bahrain have misused tear gas by [firing it directly](#) into private residences and religious sites, most notably during after-dark reprisal raids on villages suspected of housing demonstrators. Additionally, Bahraini security forces have been known to shoot tear gas canisters [directly at protestors](#) during demonstrations, often at head level and at short range. Due to Bahrain's abuse of tear gas, the United States and Britain have [banned](#) the export of the weapon to the country, noting concern for "excessive use of force and tear gas by police."

"The halting of this shipment sends an important signal: that the misuse of tear gas and continued repression of peaceful protests by the Government of Bahrain will not be tolerated," Abdulla said. "In a country where an estimated 39 people have been killed as a direct result of the use of tear gas, the success of this campaign to stop the shipment from South Korea demonstrates to both repressive governments and weapons firms that they are not above accountability."

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