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**STOP
THE
ARMS
TRADE**

Case 04: The illegal Colombian deal - how SIG Sauer, via SIG Sauer Inc. in the USA, illegally exported more than 38,000 pistols into the Colombian civil war (from 2009 to 2011)

by Jürgen Grässlin and Ruth Rohde

Successful Criminal Complaint by German "Action Outcry - Stop The Arms Trade" against SIG Sauer

Chronology of the legal export of more than 38,000 guns from Germany to the US and the illegal shipment from there to Colombia

The defendants

Michael Lüke, Robert Lacknermeier und Ron Judah Cohen have been found guilty by the district court in Kiel - 3 KLS 3/18 - 545 Js 48550/13 -

Compiled by Jürgen Grässlin, who filed the initial criminal complaint for the "Action Outcry - Stop The Arms Trade"

April 12th, 2019

The attorneys of the SIG-Sauer managers have appealed the district court's verdict. At the same time, the attorney of the arms manufacturer did the same, according to a court spokesperson.

[Source: „Revision gegen Urteil für Ex-Manager von Sig Sauer eingelegt“, DIE WELT online vom 12.04.2019]

April 3rd, 2019

The international media responded predominantly negatively to the plea agreement between the DA and the three illegal arms dealers. In a press release, the spokespeople of the German "Outcry Campaign - Stop The Arms Trade", "Aktion Aufschrei - Stoppt den Waffenhandel!" welcome the high sum that will be confiscated from Sig Sauer. "However, the suspended sentences that have been granted under the plea agreement leave us with a foul aftertaste."

This significant trial against further prominent representatives of the arms industry was initiated by a criminal complaint filed by the „Aktion Aufschrei - Stoppt den Waffenhandel“ from 2014. The Campaign was represented by the lawyer Holger Rothbauer. "This verdict is another important mile stone towards criminal accountability for the greed-driven export of small arms, these weapons of mass destruction, into war zones," said Rothbauer.

After the Heckler & Koch trial, this verdict is another victory for the Campaign to Stop the Arms trade and the peace movement. However, the plea deal under which the prosecution agreed to suspended sentences for the perpetrators is a slap in the face of countless victims in South America," says Jürgen Grässlin, who filed the criminal complaint for the Campaign to Stop the Arms Trade in 2014. „As in the trial against Heckler & Koch I welcome the high sum of more than 11 million Euros, which is to be confiscated from Sig Sauer. This should serve as a warning to other

arms companies in Germany that illegal exports to regions of conflict have consequences," commented Christine Hoffmann, secretary general of Pax Christi and spokesperson of the "Aktion Aufschrei – Stoppt den Waffenhandel!".

"Both the Heckler & Koch case as well as the trial against Sig Sauer officials show that the end-use of small arms cannot be controlled," adds Charlotte Kehne, advisor on armsexport control for "Ohne Rüstung Leben" and spokesperson for the "Aktion Aufschrei – Stoppt den Waffenhandel!". "An export prohibition for small and light weapons as well as ammunition is overdue."

[Source: „Gewinnabschöpfung positiv – Bewährung zu milde / Landgericht Kiel verurteilt Führungskräfte des Waffenherstellers SIG Sauer wegen illegaler Waffenlieferungen nach Kolumbien“, Pressemitteilung der „Aktion Aufschrei – Stoppt den Waffenhandel!“ vom 03.04.2019]

April 3rd, 2019:

Pronouncement of judgement before the Kiel District court – A deal is struck between the prosecution and the three defendants from SIG-Sauer:

The trial before the District Court in Kiel ends with suspended sentences and fines for the three defendants Lüke, Lackermeier and Cohen. The three men have previously confessed and are now sentenced to suspended sentences between 10 and 18 months, as well as fines of 60,000 Euros (Lackermeier) and 600,000 (Lüke, Cohen). More than 11 Million Euros are to be confiscated from the company group.

The court found the three SIG-Sauer managers guilty of having illegally shipped more than 38,000 SP 2022 guns from the U.S. to Colombia, which, at the time, was still embroiled in a bloody civil war. The weapons had been part of a larger shipment of 47,000 guns, that were exported from Germany to the U.S. between 2009 and 2011.

April 2019

The dossier „Sig Sauer guns in Columbia“, created by the global childrens aid organisation terre des hommes, a member of the „Aktion Aufschrei – Stoppt den Waffenhandel!“ is published. The study shows that SIG-Sauer guns such as the SP 2022 have proliferated widely in Columbia. The small arms have been sold illegally and ended up in the hands of illegal armed groups. Paramilitary groups, guerillas, drug cartels, criminals and army officials have used them for crimes, some of which involved minors.

For media requests and interviews (in Germany and Columbia):

Please contact the terre des hommes press office: Phon. 0049-541-7101-126, Email: presse@tdh.de



Peace movement protest (DFG-VK, Friedensbündnis Kiel, and Aktion Aufschrei) at the first day of trial against three SIG Sauer managers on February 26th, 2019 in front of the district court in Kiel, Germany
 Photo: GN-STAT

February 26th, 2019

Commencement of the trial against the SIG Sauer managers Michael Lüke, Robert Lacknermeier and Ron Judah Cohen before the district court in Kiel. Already on the first day the prosecution announced that a deal had been made with the defendants. Fines and suspended sentences were to be granted in turn for an admission of guilt and comprehensive testimony.

January 2019:

The district court in Kiel admits the indictment based on our criminal complaint against three SIG Sauer managers. Consequently, the hearings can commence. The transfer of guns from Germany to the USA was legal. The court is set to deliberate on the alleged illegal resale of more than 38,000 SP-2022 guns from the USA to Columbia in 99 cases.

These were exported under a contract with the US-Military for the supply of their allied Colombian National Police. However, for the German court the fact that the German export control agency (BAFA) had explicitly prohibited exports into the war-torn country, is key.

Late October 2018:

Cohen is released on a multi-million dollar bail. The payment is meant to ensure that the U.S. based arms salesman does not evade trial in Germany.

Mid-October 2018:

Ron Judah Cohen, CEO of SIG Sauer Germany's American sister company, SIG Sauer Inc., is arrested upon his arrival at the airport in Frankfurt and is transferred to Kiel. The 57-year arms manager had been searched under a European arrest warrant.

April 2018:

The district attorney in Kiel brings charges for the violation of the federal act on foreign trade against leading Sig Sauer representatives. Ron Cohen (managing director for Sig Sauer's US branch), Michael Lüke and Thomas Ortmeier (owner of the Sig-Sauer group) are all indicted for the illegal export of arms to Colombia.

According to the German news station NDR, Axel Bieler, the spokesperson of the district attorney's office, said an intensive investigation had been unavoidable, as each weapon had to be traced individually. Customs agents cooperated with agencies in Colombia and the US to determine for which gun shipments the responsible agencies had been misled on what the true destination was.

A SIG Sauer spokesperson asserted that the company was „convinced that all our exports to the USA were compliant with the law“. (NDRI 12.04.18)

2014 to 2018:

For four years the **prosecutors in Kiel conducted extensive investigations** in cooperation with national and international security agencies. The attorney Holger Rothbauer repeatedly submitted further documents for the complainants.

October 2014:

Sig Sauer announce they will from now on only produce sports weapons in Germany. Only 50 jobs are to remain in Eckernförde. The military production is moved to the SIG-Sauer factory in New Hampshire, USA.

A few days after the criminal complaint was filed:

The **district attorney's office in Kiel** intensify an investigation on suspicion of violating the war weapons control act and the federal act on foreign trade. Shortly after, the **government embargoes SIG Sauer's arms exports.**

July 22, 2014:

Jürgen Grässlin and Paul Russmann, represented by their attorney Holger Rothbauer, and acting on behalf of the „Action Outcry – Stop The Arms Trade (“Aktion Aufschrei – Stoppt den Waffenhandel!”) **file a criminal complaint against leading managers of the small-arms producer and export company, Sig Sauer from Schleswig-Holstein.**

A total of 47,000 Sig-Sauer guns type SP 2022, were legally sold by Sig Sauer's parent factory in Eckernförde, Germany, to the Government of the United States. However, 36,628 were illegally re-sold to Colombia through the US between April 2009 and April 2011. At the time a civil war was raging in the country, where the "Policia National" (the Colombian national police), have been shooting with these guns ever since. The number of people who have since been wounded and killed by the



Sig-Sauer-guns is unknown. Experience suggests that weapons, acquired as war booties, tend to be used by other parties in civil-war conflicts as well. Sig Sauer earned more than 12 million euros in proceeds from that sale.

SIG Sauer GmbH & Co. KG in Eckernförde. Photo: J. Grässlin

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>> Information about SIG Sauer Inc. in New Hampshire and the illegal pistol deal with Colombia

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>> Comprehensive research and publications on SIG-Sauer arms deals

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>> Responsible for the study on the proliferation of SIG Sauer weapons in the Columbian civil war

Important Websites

<https://stopusarmstomexico.org>
www.aufschrei-waffenhandel.de
www.juergengraesslin.com
www.tdh.de

Compilation

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