



# **THE ARMS FLYERS**

## **Commercial Aviation, Human Rights, and the Business of War and Arms**

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In the last decades, the “business of war” has attracted thousands of civilian transport and logistics companies, especially in the aviation sector. State and non-State actors engaged in armed conflicts or in military operations that require substantial logistic support have increasingly resorted to the services of civilian transport operators to fulfill their transport and logistics needs.

For air transport companies the “business of war” has historically included logistic support for the deployment and mobility of troops and military equipment; the establishment of supply chains of arms and ammunition; and the transport of people and goods in and out conflict zones.

This report firstly presents (Part I and Part II) a series of cases - from the 1980s to present - that illustrate and document the continuous involvement of aviation companies in the business of war, namely in the arms supply chains and also in covert operations, all of which have often resulted in consequent severe violations of human rights. The cases - rigorously researched - are meant to show the variety of motivations, techniques, and business relationships that have helped to shape the main characteristics of the involvement of commercial aviation in the business of war and arms transport. A copious original documentation accompanies each case. Most of the case studies have never previously been published.

The report then offers (Part III) an analysis of international and national laws on the transport of weapons by air (Chapter 11) and a discussion of air safety regulations as enacted in the US and in Europe (Chapter 12), including an assessment of the European Union list of banned air companies.

Finally, Chapter 13 deals with the, regrettably, fundamentally flawed research that has sought to use air safety initiatives as a weapon in the fight against arms trafficking by air and has thus unfortunately constituted much of the basis for European Union projects to fight arms trafficking by air.

An analysis of the present situation in air cargo markets and its influence on the logistics of wars and humanitarian operations concludes the report.

The Report is available online at: <http://www.ipisresearch.be/arms-trade.php>

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