

Volvo response to article about concerns on the use of Volvo vehicles in Israel and the Occupied Territories

Volvo sent the statement below to the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre in response to the following article:

- "Volvo: Symbol of safety or human rights abuses?" - Adri Nieuwhof, 2 July 2007
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article7074.shtml>

2007-07-06

The products of the Volvo Group – trucks, buses, industrial engines, construction equipment or aerospace components – are being used all over the world to the benefit of man and society. They are used to build roads and houses, to transport people and goods and for irrigation in the struggle to cultivate oftentimes barren soil.

It is, of course, regrettable and sad if our products are used for destructive purposes. We do not condone such actions, but we do not have any control over the use of our products, other than to affirm in our business activities a Code of Conduct that decries unethical behavior. However, just as a wheel loader can be used to clear the ground for a new house, it can be used to tear it down.

There is no way Volvo ultimately can control the use of its products. Our products are being sold openly all over the world, both new and used. The only restrictions that apply are when the buyer is a country affected by applicable trade sanctions decided on by international governmental organizations and implemented under mandatory law. We believe that we have neither the mandate nor the ability to evaluate complex political situations. Like other multinational enterprises, we rely on governments and certain international governmental organizations to make such determinations. To the extent such bodies decide on rules for international trade applicable to private parties, such as embargos or other export controls, we are obviously bound by such rules.

Legal compliance is a cornerstone of the Volvo Group Code of Conduct, which contains principles on how the Volvo Group conducts its business. Our Code of Conduct applies for all employees in all countries and is available on our website. We do not know the details in this specific case, but the piece of equipment to which you refer may be operated by a subcontractor, a small company or an individual under contract to the Israeli government. We are sure that you understand as a professional journalist that we have no possibility of determining or checking the facts about this equipment or the actual situation.

It could have been acquired new from any of the many dealers for Volvo products - but just as well have been bought from virtually anyone on the huge and international market for used construction equipment. We are sure that you understand there is no way for us to know to whom the machine was originally sold or how it ended up in the photograph. Naturally, we would regret the use of our products for destructive purposes.

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