

GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY DECLARATION ON THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

The international community stands at a crossroads in the negotiation of an Arms Trade Treaty. As democratically elected Members of Parliament worldwide, we strongly endorse and support this negotiation process, which must deliver a robust, legally binding instrument that effectively tackles the devastating consequences of armed violence and conflict around the globe.

We are concerned that the international trade in arms, when undertaken irresponsibly or diverted to illicit markets, contributes to armed conflict and armed violence. This often results in serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, internal and cross-border displacement, terrorism, organized and common crime, and the facilitation of the illicit trade in narcotics.

Moreover, it facilitates unacceptable levels of gender-based violence against women – who also disproportionately endure the indirect, longer-term consequences of armed violence. In turn, all these factors undermine peace and peace-building processes, human security, poverty reduction initiatives, and prospects for sustainable socio-economic development.

We fervently believe that a strong Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) can make a significant contribution in addressing the terrible human toll which is a direct consequence of this poorly regulated trade. At a minimum, the ATT should establish that no international transfer of arms and ammunition will be authorized if there is a substantial risk that the weapons will be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, or will seriously impair poverty reduction or socio-economic development.

We also recognize that for an Arms Trade Treaty to have proper impact, its scope must be comprehensive and include all international transfers of conventional weapons, and in particular small arms and light weapons, but also all related ammunition and equipment used to deploy potentially lethal force in military and internal security operations.

As legislators from around the world, we are not only supporters of an effective Arms Trade Treaty, we also have a major role and responsibility in making this Treaty a meaningful reality.

As Advocates – we can and will continue to actively engage with our colleagues in the executive branches of government to ensure they give the ATT the priority it deserves and remain informed of the concerns that must be properly addressed therein. We will also actively advocate for ratification of the ATT in our respective countries when the ATT is in place.

As Lawmakers – we will draft the legislation which will give effect to the ATT in our respective countries, and will seek to ensure that any such domestic laws faithfully reflects and integrates the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty.

As Guardians of the peoples' trust – we will ensure, through our oversight and accountability responsibilities, that our respective governments properly implement and enforce domestic law giving effect to the ATT. Legislation is only as good as its implementation.

As Moral Individuals, above all else, who see the lives of those near to us - and many of those who have elected us - lost, destroyed or irreparably damaged by the current inadequate regulation of the global arms trade.

We welcome the growing global support for an Arms Trade Treaty among many diverse groups – including the private sector and global investment community, survivors of armed violence, and religious leaders – who increasingly recognize that a solid ATT is in the interests of all, not just a few.

We hereby call upon all of our fellow stakeholders worldwide in the negotiation of this Arms Trade Treaty to join us as we redouble our efforts, in the months ahead, to create a strong international agreement that will prevent irresponsible and illicit arms trading between countries. A robust ATT will greatly reduce the needless and massive loss of human life and livelihoods while at the same time not impeding the operation of the legitimate global arms trade as carried out with full respect for the rule of law and international standards.

Control Arms is a global civil society alliance campaigning for a bulletproof Arms Trade Treaty that will protect lives and livelihoods.

