

For immediate release

Further ratifications show wide global support for Arms Trade Treaty

Urgent call from campaigners for extra push from states – especially African countries – to ratify and help treaty enter into force and save lives

New York, June 3 2014: Campaigners say the Arms Trade Treaty which will control the poorly-regulated trade in weapons and ammunition is more urgent now than ever before as the death toll in conflicts across the globe mounts inexorably.

It is now exactly one year since the pioneering Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) opened for signature. Today, **eight** states including **Australia, Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Samoa and St Vincent and the Grenadines** are due to ratify at a special ceremony at the United Nations headquarters, in New York. They join a growing group of states who have already ratified including major arms exporters France, Germany and the UK.

This will bring the total number of states that have ratified the treaty to date to 40 – with just 10 more to go for the 50 needed for the ATT to enter into force.

Dr Robert Mtonga, from the Control Arms Coalition, said: *“The geographic spread of states ratifying today - from Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the Pacific - shows clearly that this is a treaty with global support. We now need all these states, as well as all others who have signed the ATT, to live up to its aims and implement tough controls on the \$85bn arms trade.*

“Today’s ceremony marks another significant milestone on the road towards the Arms Trade Treaty - but we are not there yet. At least 10 more states are needed to ratify for the ATT to enter into force and become international law. We are particularly urging African states who played a key role in the negotiations to secure the ATT to now ratify the treaty as soon as possible.”

Under the ATT, states must assess the risks of weapons and ammunition being misused to commit human rights abuses or violations of humanitarian law, before they can authorize transfer.

The ATT is the first internationally-binding agreement to regulate the global trade in arms and ammunition. More than 500,000 people are killed every year by armed violence and millions more live in fear of rape, assault and displacement caused by weapons getting into the wrong hands.

People living in conflict zones across the world are paying a high price for the poorly-regulated trade each day. For example in the world’s newest country, South Sudan, the complex situation is being aggravated by a huge number of small arms and light weapons in the country which fuel conflict from the village to the national level.

Thousands of lives have already been lost this year in South Sudan and over 1.3 million have fled their homes, yet more and more weapons continue to flood into the country each day, fuelling the violence. Many are anxious to return home in spite of the growing humanitarian crisis, but fear for their safety as gross human rights violations – ethnic killings, rape, revenge attacks and the deliberate targeting of children – are taking place daily.

Anna Macdonald, from the Control Arms Coalition said: *“South Sudan is just one current example of why there is an urgent need for the ATT. Men, women and children around the world are living in fear of the risk of rape, assault, displacement and death as a result of the unregulated arms trade.*

“There is clear political will for the ATT to enter into force and this is underlined by the rapid rate at which it is being ratified. But the ATT must be more than words on paper, states must now deliver on their commitments and ensure it is implemented robustly, setting high standards to bring the arms trade under control.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. For more information or to arrange interviews call Zahra Akkerhuys on + 1 (213) 284 6637 or email media@controlarms.org

2. Eight states including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Jamaica, Luxembourg, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Samoa will be jointly depositing their instruments of ratification at a special ceremony also marking the one year anniversary of the Arms Trade Treaty opening for signature, on **Tuesday June 3, starting at 3pm**. The event will take place at Dag Hammarskjold Library Auditorium, United Nations Headquarters.

Representatives from all ratifying states will attend the event. The panel of speakers will include:

- Angela Kane, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
- Dr Robert Mtonga, from Zambia, Control Arms Coalition
- Ambassador Gary Quinlan, Permanent Representative of Australia
- Ambassador Eden Charles, Deputy Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago

A national statement will be delivered by each government on submission of the instrument.

Control Arms Coalition members from Australia, Trinidad and Tobago and the Democratic Republic of Congo will also be available for interview after the ceremony.

3. Background:

- The ATT opened for signature on June 3 2013. Since then, 118 countries have signed
- On 2 April 2013 the ATT was adopted by majority vote at the General Assembly - 154 states voted for, three voted against and 23 abstained.
- The ATT will come into force 90 days after the 50th signatory state deposits its instrument of ratification with the UN.
- By signing the ATT states commit to:
 - Properly regulate all transfers of conventional arms, ammunition or parts and components.
 - Ban the export of conventional arms, ammunition, or parts and components where there is knowledge the weapons would be used to perpetrate war crimes, genocide, attacks against civilians, and other grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.
 - Comprehensively assess the risk of any transfer contributing to or undermine peace and security or to facilitate serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law, terrorism, organised crime, gender-based violence or violence against women and children.

controlarms

- Consider the risk that arms might be re-directed from the original recipient to another user – known as “diversion”.
- Submit annual reports on its international transfers and national implementation activities to the other States Parties, improving transparency in the global arms trade.

4. To find out more about the Control Arms Coalition visit:

www.controlarms.org

www.facebook.com/controlarms

@controlarms

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/controlarms/sets/72157643263427383/>