

Arms Trade Treaty enters into force offering fresh hope for the protection of civilians in 2015

New international laws regulating the \$85bn global trade in arms and ammunition enter into force tomorrow (WEDS).

Campaigners hailed this as a huge victory as after more than a decade of campaigning, the Arms Trade Treaty becomes international law at last.

The treaty aims to set the highest standards for cross-border transfers of arms and ammunition and to cut off the supply of weapons to dictators and human rights abusers across the world.

It is one of the fastest multi-lateral arms agreements to enter into force.

Control Arms Director Anna Macdonald said: *“Civilians have paid far too high a price this year. From Aleppo to Peshawar, from Gaza to South Sudan, we have seen the devastating impact of the poorly-regulated arms trade.*

“For too long, arms and ammunition have been traded with few questions asked about whose lives they will destroy. The new Arms Trade Treaty, which enters into force this week, will bring that to an end.

“Campaigners have been pushing for this moment for a decade. If robustly-implemented, this treaty has the potential to save many lives and offer much-needed protection to vulnerable civilians around the world. It is now – finally - against international law to put weapons into the hands of human rights abusers and dictators. December 24 marks the dawn of a new era.”

Under the new rules in the ATT, before any arms transfer takes place, it must be assessed against strict criteria, including whether the arms might be used for human rights violations or war crimes. If there is a substantial risk the transfer will breach this criteria, then it cannot be authorized.

Informal discussions between governments who have ratified the treaty have been taking place this year to prepare the ground for implementation of the treaty. The next round of discussions is due to take place in Trinidad and Tobago, in February 2015.

Planning is also underway for the treaty’s first Conference of States Parties (CSP), the annual fora where states will meet to assess progress on implementation. This is expected to take place during late-August/early-September next year.

Decisions have yet to be made about the treaty’s future rules of procedure, financing mechanisms for the treaty, and the location, structure and remit of the ATT Secretariat.

To date, 127 states have signed the ATT, with 59 having ratified it. These include major arms exporters such as France, the UK and Germany.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. To arrange interviews with Control Arms Director Anna Macdonald call (212) 687 3146 or 646 713 8985 or email media@controlarms.org

2. The Control Arms Coalition is a global civil society movement of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs campaigning for tough controls on the international arms trade. Control Arms has over 100 organisations, working in over 120 countries. It includes major international NGOs such as Oxfam, Amnesty International and Saferworld, as well as many regional and national level organisations.