



Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

September 11- 15 2017
Geneva

Mr Chair. Amnesty International, speaking on behalf of Control Arms.

Many states in the general debate recognised the important role of civil society in supporting the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. Control Arms members around the world have contributed significantly to implementation including in the working groups. We strongly believe that these meetings should remain open, and we welcome the statement of Mexico in this regard.

While Amnesty International and other members in Control Arms recognise that ATT implementation is a long-term endeavour, we also believe it must be treated with the urgency it deserves, particularly the establishment of effective procedures for the implementation of Articles 6 and 7.

Key measures should include, firstly, capacity-building and information exchange on good practice and challenges faced by States Parties on the practical implementation of the treaty. We very much welcome the initiatives that have already taken place in this regard, many of which civil society has actively engaged in.

Specifically, prohibiting the transfer of conventional arms under Article 6, including where it is known the arms would be used for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other crimes, requires competent legal expertise for national licensing authorities, as well as detailed, credible and objective information systems.

States Parties must also ensure effective procedures and administrative resources to implement Article 7, so as not to authorize exports where they pose an overriding risk of being used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

Secondly, for ATT States Parties with well-established national export control structures that pre-date the ATT, this means examining potential shortcomings in risk assessment procedures which continue to allow the authorisation of irresponsible – and potentially unlawful – arms transfers.

Many civil society organisations, including Amnesty International and other Control Arms coalition members, have raised concerns about ATT States Parties and signatories continuing to authorise arms transfers to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners for use in Yemen, where the human toll of the conflict has been devastating and extensively documented.

Irresponsible arms transfers have also been authorised to Egypt, despite the Egyptian government's violent crackdown on dissent in which thousands of protesters have been killed, tortured and injured; and to the Philippines, which has seen deliberate and widespread killings of alleged drug offenders that appear to be systematic, planned and organised by the authorities. Such transfers are not merely controversial – we raise them because they clearly contravene the spirit, objective and specific provisions of the treaty, and indicate that much more work is needed to ensure effective treaty implementation and compliance.

States must not lose sight of one of the key drivers behind the Treaty: the need to reduce human suffering.