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Final Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty

Control Arms coalition calls on Chair not to cave in to pressure from India and P5 as new text falls short

Campaigners today say radical changes must be made to the latest draft of the Arms Trade Treaty by the Presidency of the Conference, if the treaty is to save lives. The Control Arms coalition said the latest text, issued on Friday, falls short of what the majority of member states demanded, and looks like a deal cooked up largely by the major exporters.

Control Arms says the President of the Conference, Ambassador Peter Woolcott, has failed to listen to calls for a strong treaty made by scores of states in a bid to get consensus at whatever price.

While campaigners want to see every member state support a future Treaty, they say this would come at too high a price if the final text still has several glaring loopholes. Under the current draft, ammunition is still poorly regulated and there is still too far high a threshold for exporters to use when assessing whether to go ahead with an arms transfer or not.

Oxfam's Head of Arms Control Anna Macdonald said: *"The Chair of the Conference has a stark choice to make. He can side with a handful of countries watering down the text or with the majority representing countless people suffering each day from the unregulated arms trade."*

"The new text is not good enough and fails to reflect the demands of the majority of the member states. Nearly 120 states called on Mr Woolcott to deliver a robust Treaty at the start of the conference, declaring that a weak treaty was worse than no treaty."

The Control Arms coalition believes the limited and narrow scope of what would be included in the future Treaty remains a major problem for the majority of countries. The coalition says ammunition is still poorly covered and a long list of weapons and munitions has been left out altogether.

Jonathan Frerichs, Programme Executive from the World Council of Churches, says: "Without bullets, the guns fall silent yet still the transfer of ammunition is not fully-covered in the text."

"When you have drones, hand grenades, armored vehicles and even military transport aircraft not covered in a Treaty meant to regulate the arms trade, you know something is not right. It defies belief and means this Treaty would not change the situation on the ground but instead maintain the status quo."

The new draft has also failed to fix the concern that too high a threshold has been set for states to use when assessing the risk that weapons will be used for human rights abuses.

Control Arms Campaign Manager Allison Pytlak says: *"At the heart of this treaty is a fundamental flaw. This text could actually fail to prevent arms being provided to human rights abusers who commit torture and extra-judicial killings."*

"We have four days of negotiations left now. Fixing this problem must be an absolute priority. Those who use irresponsibly-traded weapons to violate human rights have had it too good for too long. They should be stopped in their tracks by this treaty – not given the green light to carry on with business as usual."

The coalition also says reporting is a major area of concern and in the current draft, states will be expected to report directly to the UN without making any of their deals public.

Ms Macdonald concluded: *"We need public reporting, not secret reporting. Transparency is vital if gunrunners are to be brought to book."*



“States must make changes based not on what is easy, but what is right. Real people don’t need political compromises and easy fixes this week – they need a treaty that will stop arms flooding the world and destroying lives.”

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