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Conference of States Parties must stop the secrecy and drag \$100bn global trade out of the shadows

Campaigners say states must stop violating Arms Trade Treaty by selling deadly weapons for use on civilians in acts of ‘the worst kind of hypocrisy’

GENEVA: The second Conference of States Parties for the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) must make critical progress this week on holding governments to account by introducing mandatory public reporting of all international arms deals, say campaigners.

Representatives from the 87 States Parties and 46 signatories of the Treaty, including major arms exporters, are meeting at the World Trade Organisation, in Rue de Lausanne, this week (August 22-26) to make practical decisions on how the ATT, which entered into force in December 2014 and is the first to regulate the \$100bn global arms trade, will be implemented.

Several States Parties including the UK, Germany, France and signatory the US have so far failed to fully adhere to the Treaty, and are flouting international law in plain sight by selling billions of dollars worth of deadly weapons to Saudi Arabia, which are being used against Yemeni civilians.

Campaigners say increased transparency in the way arms deals are reported is a crucial way to put an end to such treaty violations. They are urging Ambassador Emmanuel Imohe, the President of the Conference of States Parties (CSP), to take a tough approach this week in discussions on reporting, and push States to agree that all reporting must be public.

They have also called on States Parties to include a discussion of the grave situation in Yemen on the meeting agenda, with a view to securing their commitment to immediately halting the transfer of weapons to Saudi Arabia and its allies where these are at risk of being used in Yemen.

Control Arms Director Anna Macdonald said: *“The ATT has been in force for nearly two years but some States Parties are violating it with impunity. Every day, we are seeing the devastating impact of the sale of arms and ammunition for use on civilians in Yemen.*

“By ratifying the ATT, states agreed to reduce the human suffering through new global rules for the arms trade, which forbid arms transfers that violate humanitarian law, but some are undermining this commitment through acts of the worst kind of hypocrisy. That needs to stop.

“The best way to make states more accountable and ensure such deals do not go ahead is by ensuring all arms transfers are made public. Full and open reporting is vital to the successful implementation of the treaty and is the only way to drag the arms trade out of the shadows.”

At the first CSP, held in Cancun last year, States Parties failed to decide on whether reporting should be made public, dodging the issue of transparency. This year, Control Arms

wants to see the proposed reporting template become more detailed and comprehensive so it will require open and transparent reporting of all future cross-border transfers of arms and ammunition.

Amnesty International (Switzerland)'s human rights policy advisor Alain Bovard said: *"It is absolutely critical for the effective implementation of the rules in the ATT designed to help protect human rights that the annual arms export and import reports of states are published without delay on the internet.*

"If parliaments, media and civil society organizations cannot see the annual export and import reports they will not be able to effectively scrutinize governments to guard against irresponsible conduct."

It is not just Yemeni civilians who are feeling the devastating consequences of the continuation of illicit arms deals. Weapons have also continued to pour into conflict zones across the world – from Syria to South Sudan – since the ATT entered into force.

Under the ATT, all arms deals must be assessed against strict criteria, including the risk of the arms being used for human rights violations or war crimes, or risk being diverted for terrorist and other criminal acts. The treaty states that if there is a substantial risk the transfer will breach any of those criteria, the arms transfer cannot be authorised.

Geoffrey L. Duke, Secretariat Director of the South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA) said: *"My country has been devastated by years of deadly civil war. Governments have repeatedly authorised weapons to be transferred into South Sudan to fuel this violence.*

"So many lives have been lost, so many futures destroyed and the hopes of a whole nation held hostage by armed violence. The ATT has the potential to help create a better future for the people of South Sudan by curbing the irresponsible transfer of arms into my country.

"The ATT is not just a piece of paper – it has the potential to save lives. I call on diplomats here in Geneva to act responsibly and not throw away the chance to make sure the ATT makes a real difference."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. Spokespeople are available for interview including Control Arms Director Anna Macdonald (in English) and Amnesty International (Switzerland) policy advisor Alain Bovard (in French). To arrange interviews contact:

- **Zahra Akkerhuys** via media@controlarms.org

Additional Control Arms Coalition representatives present in Geneva are also available for interview in French and Spanish.

2. Earlier this year, the ATT Monitor project of the Control Arms Coalition, released a report, naming France, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK, and the US as having reported licenses and sales to Saudi Arabia worth more than \$25bn worth of arms in 2015 including drones, bombs, torpedoes, rockets and missiles.



These are the types of arms currently being used by Saudi Arabia for war crimes and gross violations of human rights during aerial and ground attacks in Yemen. Violations are also being committed by Houthi forces, who have captured and acquired arms via diversion, though the report did not address this issue due to a lack of reliable data.

For the full report visit: <http://armstreatymonitor.org/current/dealing-in-double-standards-how-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia-are-causing-human-suffering-in-yemen/>

4. 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 represents 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.

5. Every day, up to 2000 people are killed globally by armed violence and millions more live in fear of rape, assault and displacement caused by weapons getting into the wrong hands.

6. For a complete list of ATT States Parties and signatories click here:

<http://controlarms.org/en/universalization-tracker/>