



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Arms Trade Treaty: Children Are not Military Targets**

*"We must focus on why the Arms Trade Treaty was created in the first place; to save lives and reduce human suffering"*

States must immediately stop arms transfers that violate the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and are killing and injuring thousands of civilians, the global Control Arms Coalition said today, as an international meeting on the Treaty begins in Tokyo.

Delegates from the 97 States Parties and 38 Signatories of the ATT, plus Observers and civil society will attend the fourth Conference of States Parties in Tokyo from 20-24 August, chaired by Japan, to report on progress made in implementing the Treaty.

"American and British bombs have been dropping on our people for more than three years now. We keep thinking it cannot get worse, and now we have had a school bus bombed, with dozens of young children killed," said Ali Jameel, Researcher for Mwatana for Human Rights in Yemen.

Jameel is travelling from Yemen to Japan to call on world governments to stop selling weapons that are killing Yemeni civilians daily: "The point of the Arms Trade Treaty is to reduce human suffering. I want to ask governments directly to live up to this."

"While some governments have heeded our call for an immediate halt to arms transfers to the Saudi-led Coalition, it is appalling that the flow of weapons from the United Kingdom, France and United States continues to the Saudi-led coalition," said Anna Macdonald, Control Arms Director. "We have seen the airstrikes reach a new, horrifying low."

Control Arms' ATT Monitor Annual Report for 2018, to be launched today at the conference, shows that governments this year reported arms transfers to countries where evidence of violations of international law is increasing. This year, only three States Parties kept their annual reports confidential, though all states are encouraged to submit publicly available reports. Reducing secrecy in the arms trade is one of the aims of the ATT, and campaigners consider this an important step forward in efforts to reduce corruption, heavily linked to the global arms trade.

Shobha Pradhan Shrestha, Founder and Executive Chair of Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal, who works every day with women survivors and ex-combatants who have suffered directly from the impact of the poorly regulated arms trade, will be speaking on the opening panel of the conference on behalf of civil society. Tackling the diversion of arms from the legal to the illegal trade, a major cause of arms-fueled violence and criminal activity worldwide, is one of the themes of the conference.

"I am hoping that governments will seize this opportunity to take concrete action to address diversion," she said. "They have the power to greatly reduce the number of arms that get diverted from the legal to the illegal trade and this could make an enormous difference to people's lives all around the world."

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

For more information, an advance copy of the 2018 ATT Monitor Report and/or to arrange interviews, please contact Aaron Laine, [media@controlarms.org](mailto:media@controlarms.org), 080-4886-8689.



The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted at the UN in 2013, and entered into force in December 2014. It currently has 97 States Parties and a further 38 are signatories. Japan ratified the Treaty in 2014.

Spokespeople available for interview include

- Anna Macdonald, Director, Control Arms (English)
- Ali Jameel, Mwatana Organisation for Human Rights (English, Arabic)
- Shobha Shrestha, Women, Peace and Democracy (English)

Additional Control Arms Coalition representatives, including armed violence survivors, are also available for interview.

Control Arms is a global civil society movement campaigning to stop arms transfers that fuel poverty, conflict and human rights abuses. Control Arms members include hundreds of non-governmental organisations from all world regions.

For a complete list of ATT States Parties and Signatories see:

<http://www.thearmstradetreaty.org/index.php/en/>.