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THE WORLD IS FLOODED WITH WEAPONS – TIME TO STOP THE ILLICIT TRADE

100 STATES RATIFY ARMS TRADE TREATY, BUT NEED ROBUST ACTION

Mozambique is latest state to announce ratification – and will deposit its instrument in New York today

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the first global agreement to regulate the \$85bn annual trade in arms and ammunition. Every day, up to 1500 people are killed by armed violence and millions more live in fear of rape, assault and displacement caused by weapons getting into the wrong hands.

Today, Mozambique will ratify at a special ceremony at the United Nations headquarters in New York, taking the number of ratifying states to 100.

Campaigners hailed today as a historic moment, and called for all countries to ensure effective implementation of the treaty, to stop arms deals that are fueling conflict, poverty and human rights abuses.

Director of the Control Arms Coalition Anna Macdonald said: *“Reaching 100 States parties is a big achievement for a treaty as complex and far reaching as the Arms Trade Treaty. Now we need governments to live up to the aspirations of this agreement and stop selling arms that are fueling conflict and human rights abuses. No governments should be supplying weapons to any warring party in Yemen right now.*

Civilians have been paying too high a price for the lack of global arms controls which have permitted arms and ammunition to be legally transferred into the hands of dictators and warlords. But the game is up now – those days are over. Now governments have the chance to change the arms trade for good, and if rigorously implemented this treaty will save lives.”

The world’s worst humanitarian crisis is currently Yemen, which is flooded with weapons, with a child dying every 10 minutes. Yet 30% of global trade in weapons continue to be exported to the Middle East. Countries need to seriously implement their treaty obligations, and stop arms deals that are fueling this carnage.

Reaching the landmark figure of 100 has been welcomed by campaigners all over the world – particularly in countries affected by armed violence and states where irresponsible weapons trading has cost lives.

Mozambican campaigner Albino Forquilha, the Director of NGO FOMICRES said:

“Mozambique comes from a deeply destructive civil war, arms used to pore across our borders and wreak havoc. This treaty is of great importance in the prevention of future conflicts, but also in guaranteeing public security and stability of peace itself. Mozambique should now make sure it complies fully with the provisions of this treaty. It should also encourage other countries in the southern African region to adhere to and ratify the ATT.”

Under the ATT, states must assess the risks of weapons and ammunition being misused to commit human rights abuses or violations of humanitarian law. Where the risk is high, they must deny the transfer.

Contact for information and to arrange interviews:

NY: Aaron Laine aaron.laine@controlarms.org +1 475 343 1535

Geneva : Samantha Bolton – samanthabolton@gmail.com +41 79 239 2366



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Notes to editors:

- The ATT became international law on December 24, 2014
- Mozambique is the 100th States party – 25 are from Africa
- Another 35 signatories await ratification
- The ATT is the first treaty to include “gender-based violence” within its provisions
- Only governments can control trade by granting or refusing licenses, by forbidding certain weapons or by imposing arms embargoes and suspensions

By ratifying the ATT states commit to:

- Ban the export of conventional arms, ammunition, or parts and components where there is knowledge the weapons would be used to perpetrate war crimes, genocide, attacks against civilians, and other grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.
- Comprehensively assess the risk of any transfer contributing to or undermine peace and security or to facilitate serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law, terrorism, organised crime, gender-based violence or violence against women and children.
- Take action to prevent the diversion of weapons.
- Submit annual reports on its international transfers and national implementation activities to the other States Parties, improving transparency in the global arms trade
- Not to allow transfer of weapons to non-law compliant warring parties, especially if there is a real risk of weapon misuse and high civilian casualties
- Establish a control list of the categories of weapons they will regulate, submit an annual report on their authorised transfers, keep track of stockpiles and appoint a national point of contact for the Treaty