



PRESS RELEASE

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Arms Trade Treaty: Arms Trade Treaty's credibility under challenge

As the fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) begins in Geneva, the international Control Arms coalition is warning of the steady erosion of the Treaty's impact and credibility as a result of consistent violations by some of its members.

"The flagrant and ongoing contravention of the spirit and specific obligations of the Treaty by some of the major arms exporting states in the world constitutes the most worrying challenge to its effectiveness as a tool to reduce human suffering," said Control Arms member Nounou Booto Meeti of Center for Peace Security and Armed Violence Prevention (CPS-AVIP).

"Arms exports to the members of the Saudi Arabia/UAE-led coalition that has inflicted an entirely preventable humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen are precisely the types or deals that the ATT was designed to prevent. Today there is no more egregious challenge to the Treaty's integrity," added Raluca Muresan of Control Arms.

Delegates from 74 States Parties and 12 Signatories to the ATT, in addition to Observers and civil society delegates will examine progress made in implementing the Treaty at the CSP5 from August 26-30. At the conference, Control Arms will reiterate its longstanding call for arms exports to the Saudi Arabia/UAE-led coalition for potential use in Yemen to cease immediately. Coalition members will also draw attention to recent court rulings and ongoing legal challenges with respect to arms exports from a range of countries to the Saudi-led coalition, which underscore the dubious legal footing of these exports.

For Control Arms, the growing number of red flags surrounding such exports, as well as the well-documented humanitarian catastrophe that has affected millions of Yemeni men, women and children, demand a decisive response from the international community that must be aligned with expectations and legal obligations under the Treaty. The Coalition welcomes the decision of some states, such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland to restrict their armed exports to warring parties in the Yemen conflict.

At the conference, Control Arms will launch the 2019 edition of the ATT Monitor Annual Report which shows that some governments have continued to transfer arms to countries where there is evidence of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. This year, too many states have failed to meet their obligation to publish an annual report on their arms exports and imports. Only 45 States Parties, or 49 percent, submitted an annual report by the deadline. Though more have since been submitted, the reporting rate continues to be worryingly low. Of those States Parties that did report, seven 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 irresponsible transfers and to reduce corruption, heavily linked to the global arms trade.

To encourage further transparency and accountability in arms transfers decisions, Control Arms will also host a side event that will present the findings of the ATT Monitor 2019 Report, and another that will explore the emerging role of legal reviews of arms transfers decisions and their implications for the ATT State Parties.

The Control Arms coalition heartily welcomes the attention given to Gender-Based Violence, which constitutes a critical dimension to better understand the pattern of harm caused by unscrupulous, illegal and irresponsible arms exports.

According to Shobha Shresta of Women for Peace and Security, Nepal “A proper recognition of the many ways in which armed violence has a distinct, identifiable gendered impact is crucial for the effective implementation of the Treaty. It is imperative that states parties to the ATT go beyond rhetorical statements merely acknowledging GBV and make the prevention of GBV a central pillar of their Treaty implementation efforts.”

Control Arms welcomes the newest states parties to the Treaty: Palau, Lebanon, Botswana and Canada, and calls on all other states to either ratify or accede to the ATT without further delay.

Nounou Booto Meeti, a member of the Control Arms coalition from the Democratic Republic of Congo, has experienced first-hand the devastating humanitarian impact of armed violence that could be prevented or minimized with full and effective Treaty implementation by all states.

“Irresponsible arms transfers exacerbate armed conflict, enable the violation of human rights and sustain repressive regimes. They create conditions in which innocent civilians die, every single day,” said Shobha Shresta of Women for Peace and Security, Nepal. “For this treaty to be truly meaningful and effective the business-as-usual approach to the global arms trade must change dramatically.”

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Notes to Editors

For more information, an advance copy of the 2019 ATT Monitor Report and/or to arrange interviews, please contact Aaron Laine, media@controlarms.org, +41 79 731 98 30.

See links for photographs of campaign action and the conference:

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.

For a complete list of ATT States Parties and Signatories click here:
<http://armstreaty.org/issue/tracking-the-universalisation-of-the-att/>