

Q&As

How would an international Arms Trade Treaty work?

An effective ATT would be based on simple criteria: no transfers of weapons when there is a substantial risk that they may be used for serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law or may impair poverty reduction.

Governments would have to authorize every transfer of weapons out of or into their territory, based on these criteria.

For example, a sale would be denied if there was a major risk that it might result in breaches of human rights or international humanitarian law. It would also be denied if it was possible that the arms would provoke or prolong a conflict; hurt a country's socio-economic development or be diverted into the hands of terrorists or on the black market.

Aren't there already international rules about the arms trade?

Patchy, diverse and often completely absent - national regulations have failed to adapt to the increasingly globalized nature of the arms trade. Arms companies, operating from an increasing number of locations, now source components from across the world. Their products are often assembled in countries with lax controls on where they end up.

While existing national and regional controls are important, these are not enough to stop

irresponsible transfers of arms and ammunition between countries. Gaps and legal loopholes can too easily be exploited by unscrupulous government and arms dealers. The result? Weapons end up in the wrong hands.

What about weapons currently in circulation?

We can tackle the spread of arms by "turning the tap off and mopping the floor." The ATT focuses on the former through putting in place stronger controls on the international movement of all arms, including old stockpiles or used weapons. This will help stop the flow of arms and ammunition into communities in conflict already awash with weapons. Complementary efforts are needed to "drain the pool."

Why aren't you asking for a complete end to the arms trade?

Some arms have a legitimate use in society. States have the right to national self-defense and to protect the lives, liberty, and physical integrity of their citizens. But with the right to self-defense and law enforcement also comes the responsibility to use arms within international law.

Will an ATT affect domestic gun laws?

No. An ATT would be used to control only international transactions of conventional weapons. Regulating domestic trade and gun-ownership will remain the prerogative of national governments.



It's time to act



1 person dies every minute from armed violence. In that same minute, 15 new arms are manufactured.

Now is the time to support the global Arms Trade Treaty.

control arms

control arms

Millions of people suffer every day from the direct and indirect consequences of the irresponsible and poorly regulated arms trade. While there are treaties on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, **there is no international treaty** on the global arms trade – it's as simple as that.

As a result, thousands are killed, far more people are injured, many are forced to flee from their homes, and others have to live under constant threat of weapons falling into the wrong hands. After all, what are terrorists, dictators, and drug kingpins without their weapons?

Somehow, **the world has never properly regulated** the conventional arms trade, arguably the most dangerous trade there is! We have complex and strict rules on all sorts of products from bananas to iPods, but no global rules for trading tanks, machine guns and bullets.

This needs to change. The Arms Trade Treaty can be the solution.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will be the first international treaty to regulate the trade in deadly conventional weapons.

It must be much more than a simple trade agreement. The ATT has the potential to stop arms transfers where there is a significant risk that those weapons will be used in abuses and atrocities.

But, in order for that to happen, the Treaty must:

Stop the transfer of arms or ammunition where there is a substantial risk that they will:

- be used in serious violations of international human rights or international humanitarian law
- fuel armed violence, acts of genocide, or crimes against humanity
- facilitate terrorist attacks, gender-based violence, violent or organized crime
- undermine regional security, socio-economic development or poverty reduction
- likely be diverted to unauthorized users.

Include all conventional arms including their parts and ammunition, all transfers and all transactions.

Be transparent, effective and enforceable.

In July 2012, governments will meet for four weeks at the United Nations to negotiate the treaty. We have one shot at a bullet proof Arms Trade Treaty – so let's hit the target!

Illustrating the need for an ATT

Syria is a chilling example of why a global Arms Trade Treaty is urgently needed. The international community has been unable to agree on an embargo of weapons to the Syrian regime even as it continues to kill thousands of its own people. Various acts of the Syrian government during the current conflict, such as the use of lethal force on unarmed

demonstrators and the use of tanks, artillery, and combat aircraft in civilian population centers, constitute serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. A robust ATT would stop weapons from heading into this conflict situation, and even more importantly will help to prevent such situations from arising in the future.

How to take action

There are a lot of ways that you can make a difference. The "Speak Out! Control Arms Now" campaign is led by an international coalition of organizations and individuals who want to see the strongest treaty possible. Here are some easy ways to be involved:

Sign the petition

Visit www.controlarms.org/petition and sign our global appeal to governments to secure an ATT that effectively prevents arms from fuelling such atrocities and abuses.

Tweet it!

"This year governments have one shot to control the weapons trade. Time for a bulletproof #armstreaty via @controlarms <http://speakout.controlarms.org>"

Share on Facebook

or like our Facebook group page.

Write to your government

and tell them why you want them to negotiate a bulletproof Arms Trade Treaty.

Follow our countdown

to the negotiations as each day we share a new reason for why we need an ATT.

Distribute "Speak Out" materials

at any gathering. Whether you are at school, a place of worship or at work, share the word about the Arms Trade Treaty and how to make it a strong one.