



## **Eighth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty**

### **GENERAL STATEMENT**

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Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

Universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and its rigorous implementation remain the highest priorities for Control Arms. With support from Switzerland, last year Control Arms reopened its small grants programs as a way to generate momentum, awareness and engagement in capitals of the ATT. As a result, coalition members in nine countries in Africa and Latin America undertook specific action to mobilize national authorities, parliamentarians and civil society organizations to advance efforts to ratify, accede to or implement the ATT.

In this statement, Control Arms' will set out its concerns on the work of the ATT and how these could be remedied.

For the last eight years, States Parties have engaged robustly in planning, shaping and building the ATT structure to provide a basis for Treaty implementation. These undertakings provide the necessary foundation upon which to build a comprehensive, effective and inclusive treaty regime.

However, in focusing on unpacking exercises, voluntary guides, and multiple thematic papers focused on technical aspects of diversion, we have neglected to provide straightforward and practical information to states on how to implement the Treaty's obligations.

Instead we have gone down a road of ever-more abstract guidance, without properly discussing real-world application of the ATT. Wholly missing are conversations about concrete cases of potential diversion, the steps taken to assess an export and the reasoning behind why a particular export is approved or denied.

Yet, as we continue to work to build and strengthen the foundations of the ATT here in Geneva, we must also at every step, consider the cost - the human cost - of irresponsible arms transfers. It is critical that we integrate into the conversation these pressing concerns that affect the daily lives of so many around the world, to ensure that we do not lose sight of the Treaty's purpose - to reduce human suffering.

For years Control Arms has sought to point out the dangers of a permissive approach to arming the war in Yemen. Many states have agreed with our assessment and denied arms transfers to any of the



combatants for use in Yemen, but none have been willing to share their national approaches toward risk assessment.

Control Arms has however been pleased to hear states this week making references to their military assistance to Ukraine and welcomes calls by states to halt arms transfers to Russia. We encourage States Parties to share information regarding the steps taken to apply the ATT risk assessment to this and other contexts. A substantive conversation around arms transfers to states in conflict and areas affected by armed violence could illuminate how the ATT criteria is applied and provide a much needed window into the risk assessment process.

To summarize, our collective efforts must:

- (1) result in guidance to states that is practical and easily understood,
- (2) take into account the human dimension, that is, the human suffering caused by arms transfers and the diversion of weapons which fuel armed violence and violations of human rights,
- (3) ensure that all States Parties are doing their part to implement the Treaty's obligations and therefore, we strongly encourage the sharing of information on ATT risk assessments in exports.

Control Arms believes that these proposals can assist in strengthening implementation of the ATT, demonstrate its real world relevance and ensure that the Treaty is making a contribution to preventing human suffering. From Yemen to Ukraine, from Syria to Myanmar, the ATT and its risk assessment has a role to play.