



MYTHS & FACTS

There are some misconceptions regarding the goals of the Arms Trade Treaty Conference as well as the intentions of the United Nations and its Member States. The following points address these common myths.

MYTH: The name of the Conference is “United Nations Small Arms Conference”.

FACT: The name of the Conference is “**United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty**”.

MYTH: The Conference is being convened to draft a global treaty to ban ownership of firearms.

FACTS: The UN is **not pursuing a global treaty to ban gun ownership by civilians**. Member States are committed to tightening controls over the **international** import, export and transfers of conventional arms, because without such controls it is easier for weapons to be diverted from the legal trade into the illegal market, and into the hands of terrorists, drug traffickers and criminal cartels.

The United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty will **not aim to ban** any weapon category from being traded, but the Conference **will aim to set regulations** on the global, cross-border trade in various conventional weapons, which until now has largely remained unregulated.

The global trade in nearly all categories of manufactured goods (such as pharmaceutical products, electronic appliances, automobiles etc.) is regulated by rules which bind exporters and importers to commonly agreed conduct. The global trade in conventional weapons should be no exception.

MYTH: There is a UN Convention banning the possession of firearms.

FACTS: Each **sovereign State determines its own laws** and regulations for the manufacture, sale and possession of firearms by its citizens. The United Nations has **no jurisdiction over such matters**.

UN Member States adopted a legal convention by consensus, in force since September 2003, to tackle **transnational organized crime**. In it, they agreed to work together to counter drug trafficking; trafficking in human beings; trafficking in firearms; smuggling of migrants and money laundering. No UN agreement exists banning firearms possession.

MYTH: The Conference proceedings are not democratic, transparent or open.

FACT: Member States have invited the **participation of media representatives, non-governmental organizations and public interest groups** in the Conference. Some sessions may be limited to government representatives only. “Gun-control advocates” and “pro-gun organizations” alike have participated in numerous UN meetings in the past and will be present also at the Conference. All organizations have an equal opportunity to present their views.

MYTH: The Conference outcome will be imposed on countries whether they like it or not.

FACT: It is up to the national delegations to agree upon an Arms Trade Treaty that will have a real impact on the lives of people suffering from the poorly regulated international arms trade. **No treaty can be imposed upon a sovereign Member State.** All countries are **free to adopt and ratify an Arms Trade Treaty or to choose not to do so.**

MYTH: Meetings have been scheduled to take place on the 4th of July 2012 on the Independence Day of the United States.

FACT: **No meetings have been scheduled for the 4th of July 2012,** as UN Headquarters in New York will be officially closed on that day.

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