

FACT SHEET

ARMS TRADE TREATY

The historic adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) marks a turning point in the international community’s efforts to regulate the global trade in conventional arms and to promote peace and security. Virtually two-thirds of States have signed the ATT.

In all parts of the world, the ready availability of weapons and ammunition leads to human suffering, political repression, crime and terror among civilian populations. Irresponsible arms transfers can destabilise an entire region, enable violations of arms embargoes and contribute to human rights abuses. Investment is discouraged and development disrupted in countries experiencing conflict and high levels of violence. Countries affected by conflict or pervasive crime have the most difficulty attaining internationally agreed development goals.



Adoption of the ATT at the UN General Assembly, 2 April 2013

Setting global norms

Virtually all areas of world trade are covered by regulations that bind countries into agreed conduct. Before the adoption of the ATT by the General Assembly of the United Nations, there was no global set of rules governing the trade in conventional weapons. The ATT sets robust international standards to help guide governments in deciding whether or not to authorise arms transfers. It provides for cooperation and assistance to help countries develop adequate regulatory systems and safe weapons stockpiles.

For the United Nations, the Arms Trade Treaty holds powerful promises

- Reduce armed conflict and violence, which impact millions of civilians every year;
- Help create a more conducive environment for the UN to carry out its mandates in peacekeeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Foster a safer environment for humanitarian actors – those delivering food aid, protecting refugees, empowering of women, etc – operating in volatile areas across the globe.

Follow signatures/ratifications on www.un.org/disarmament/ATT

Essential elements of the ATT

- **Scope:** All important weapons systems: battle tanks, armed personnel carriers, artillery, fighter jets, attack helicopters, warships, missiles, and small arms and light weapons.
- **Ammunition** as well as parts and components are covered.
- **Prohibitions on transfers:** Any transfer that could violate Security Council arms embargoes or be used to commit acts of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.
- **Criteria for assessment of exports:** States will deny an export if there is an "overriding risk" that weapons may be used to negatively impact peace and security, undermine international humanitarian/human rights law, facilitate terrorism, organised crime, and gender-based violence.
- **Commitment to regulate:** Countries commit to develop an export and import control system. Furthermore, they are also encouraged to regulate transit of weapons through their territories and arms brokers.
- **Commitment to report:** Transparency is paramount. States commit to report on their present regulatory system, and their actual imports and exports of weapons.
- **International cooperation/assistance:** The ATT includes provisions on institutional capacity-building and establishes a UN trust fund to help States implement the treaty.

The role of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs

- Coordinating the UN system on all issues related to the arms trade;
- Building synergies with related topics such as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and weapons stockpile management;
- Offering a 'one-stop shop' for donors and for countries requesting assistance;
- Providing advice and assisting in implementation and capacity-building – especially through UNODA regional centres in Lome, Lima and Kathmandu.

Supporting activities



The United Nations multi-donor UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) provides a flexible funding mechanism for assisting implementation of the ATT. For information contact us at conventionalarms-unoda@un.org or visit www.un.org/disarmament/UNSCAR.

“This treaty demonstrates that great things can be achieved when governments and civil society work together through the United Nations.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

www.un.org/disarmament