



For immediate release

Statement of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide on the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty at the United Nations General Assembly

(New York, 02 April 2013) The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, welcomes the inclusion in the newly adopted Arms Trade Treaty of a prohibition on the transfer of arms which would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity and certain war crimes and calls on States to act quickly to apply this prohibition, pending its entry into force.

Article 6(3) of the Treaty stipulates that State Parties “*shall not authorize any transfer of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1) or of items covered under Article 3 or Article 4, if it has knowledge at the time of authorization that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes.*” Article 23 stipulates that “*Any State may at the time of signature or the deposit of instrument of its ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, declare that it will apply provisionally Article 6 and Article 7 pending the entry into force of this Treaty for that State.*”

The Special Adviser urged States to take advantage of the provision, which allows States to declare that they will provisionally apply this prohibition pending the entry into force of the treaty. “The prevention of genocide is too important to postpone to a future date,” he said. “This new treaty can play an important role in preventing genocide if states act now to provisionally apply the prohibition on transfers of arms which would be used to commit genocide.”

States should give priority to putting these prohibitions in place at the national and international level. “Genocide depends in part on the availability of arms and ammunition. Despite some shortcomings of this treaty, its adoption represents an important step forward in the struggle to prevent genocide and provides a new legal tool to protect those at risk of their lives, and groups threatened with destruction.”

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