



ATT MONITOR

Civil society perspectives on the Arms Trade Treaty
First Conference of States Parties
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Reaching Critical Will

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EDITORIAL: WHAT MATTERS AT CSP1

Ray Acheson | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

Two and a half years after the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was adopted, the first Conference of States Parties (CSP1) is gathering in Mexico to set the rules of engagement for future meetings and establish some key mechanisms for the Treaty's implementation. States parties will need to make decisions about the secretariat, financing, rules of procedure, participation, and reporting. All are important for the effective implementation of the Treaty. But most important of all is that the CSP establishes expectations—and mechanisms—to ensure the highest possible standards for international arms transfers are achieved and maintained. To do so, some serious reflection on the state of the arms trade will be necessary.

Components for bombs used by the United Arab Emirates in the Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen, which have killed civilians, were manufactured by an Italy-based subsidiary of a German company. US-made cluster munitions have been found near Yemeni villages. The UK has reportedly expedited weapons sales to Saudi Arabia since the airstrikes began.¹ During the last Israeli military operation in Gaza in 2014, the UK refused to impose an arms embargo even though the bombing and shelling of Gaza resulted in the deaths of scores of Palestinian civilians and destruction of schools, shelters, and critical infrastructure.²

There are countless examples of irresponsible arms transfers since states adopted the ATT in 2013 and since it entered into force at the end of 2014. There are also countless examples of the use of banned weapons (cluster munitions in Ukraine), indiscriminate weapons (barrel bombs in Syria), and explosive weapons in populated areas (Gaza, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, etc.). Guns and other small arms continue to flow to regions of armed conflict. All have resulted in the deaths of civilians, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, and have undermined peace and security. Yet there have been few outcries about how any of this relates to the ATT, even when its states

parties are responsible for the transfers that lead to these deaths and injuries.

At this CSP, states will be focused on logistical and technical matters. But we all must keep this much bigger picture in mind as we conduct our work. What modalities for reporting and record keeping will best facilitate increased transparency around the arms trade so that we can more effectively prevent transfers that are likely to lead to the harm and suffering we see today? What kind of civil society participation will best facilitate an accurate representation from diverse perspectives—including survivors—of what is needed most in terms of the Treaty's implementation?

There are many useful recommendations set out from a civil society perspective in Control Arms' briefing paper *Save Lives*.³ To those, WILPF would add that at this CSP, all ATT states parties and signatories should commit to not approve arms transfers that pose any risk under the criteria established by article 7 of the Treaty. States must not put profits over people: a thorough risk assessment process, in consultation with civil society and relevant international organisations, is critical to preventing irresponsible transfers.

Crucially, when assessing potential human rights and IHL abuses, state authorities and civil society monitoring mechanisms must include the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) as a key priority. This includes GBV within armed conflict and outside of it, including domestic violence. WILPF has released a new resource looking at how risk assessments can effectively take GBV into account.⁴ This form of violence is often overlooked because it disproportionately affects women, who are often in a disadvantaged position compared to men when it comes to highlighting and confronting human rights abuses. Including this provision in the Treaty underlines the need for prevention of GBV explicitly and makes its exclusion from risk assessments more dif-

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The *ATT Monitor* is produced by the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), produced daily during the ATT negotiations, conferences of states parties, and other relevant meetings.

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of WILPF or Reaching Critical Will.

Editorial, continued

ficult. It further highlights that the trade, possession, and use of weapons have specific gender and power dimensions that need to be further examined and addressed.

As we get on with the work of CSP1, Reaching Critical Will will monitor the meetings and provide daily analysis and reporting. But our attention is not limited to the conference rooms in Cancun. Civil society groups and journalists around the world have a critical eye trained on the international arms trade. Preventing human suffering was the motivation for the ATT's development; it must now remain the critical objective of the Treaty's implementation. •

1 Charlotte Alfred, "Bombs Made in U.S., Europe Turn Up On Yemen's Battlefield," The World Post, 24 July 2015,

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/yemen-war-weapons_55b25ca8e4b0074ba5a4483f; Malachy Browne, "Blood money: How your 401k profits from bombing Yemen," reported.ly, 24 June 2015, <https://firstlook.org/reportedly/2015/06/24/blood-money-italy-bomb-yemen/>.

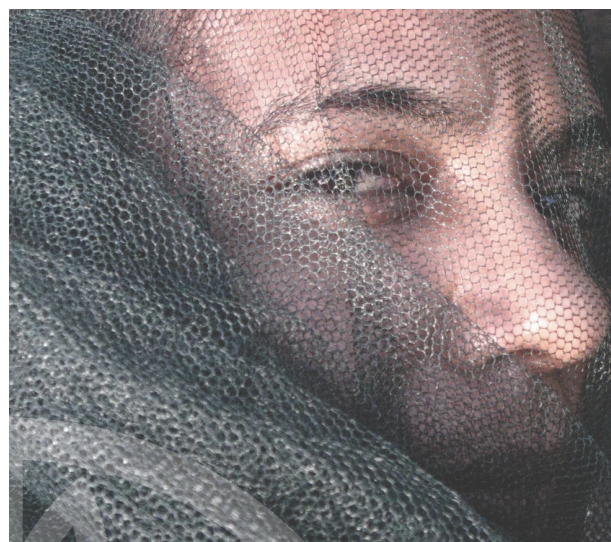
2 "WILPF calls on the UK to end its role in Israel's humanitarian law violations," Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 7 August 2014, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/news/latest-news/9046-wilpf-calls-on-uk-to-end-its-role-in-israel-s-humanitarian-law-violations>.

3 Save Lives, Control Arms, August 2015, <http://controlarms.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/08/Save-Lives.pdf>.

4 Gender-based violence and the Arms Trade Treaty, Reaching Critical Will of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, August 2015, http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Publications/GBV_ATT-brief.pdf.

CALENDAR OF SIDE EVENTS

When	What	Where	Who
13:00	Working lunch: Transfer criteria on the ATT - making real the promise of reducing the human cost of arms trade	TBC	International Committee of the Red Cross
14:00	Launch of "Nordic Arms Transfer Controls and the Arms Trade Treaty: Strengths and Challenges"	TBC	SaferGlobe, Finland
14:00	Arms transfer control in French-speaking countries - lessons learned for the implementation of the ATT	TBC	Groupe de Recherche et Information de la Paix, France



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

A PROGRAMME OF
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR
PEACE & FREEDOM

- New publication -

Gender-based violence and the Arms Trade Treaty

The ATT is the first ever legally-binding regime that recognises the link between gender-based violence (GBV) and the international arms trade.

We have produced a briefing paper aims to provide some background on the terminology around GBV and to highlight questions that will be relevant for risk assessments under article 6 and 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty.

*Available online
at*

www.reachingcriticalwill.org!