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## EDITORIAL: PRIORITISING PEOPLE OVER PROFITS

Ray Acheson | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

**O**n Monday, the second Conference of States Parties (CSP2) of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) begins in Geneva. This meeting should provide states, international organisations, and civil society with the opportunity to address challenges in the Treaty's implementation, establish comprehensive and transparent reporting procedures for arms transfers, and above all take on profiteering from war and violence.

The ATT must be about reducing human suffering, not legitimising the arms trade. States parties must implement the Treaty with a view to enhancing peace, justice, and human rights, not profits and political manipulation. Each and every arms transfer must be weighed against the risks highlighted in the ATT, such as potential human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) violations.

There is much work to be done at CSP2, and decisions around reporting are particularly critical. States parties must ensure

transparency through comprehensive, public reporting. This is key to effective implementation of the ATT. It would be a backwards step in transparency if states are given the option not to have their reports publicly available.

But beyond transparency, the core objective of the ATT is to protect human rights, prevent armed violence and armed conflict, and enhance peace and security. Thus states parties should take the opportunity of being gathered together in Geneva to challenge and condemn arms transfers that violate and undermine the Treaty, especially those made by other state parties.

For example, arms transfers to Saudi Arabia have been condemned by many human rights and disarmament or arms control groups, the Committee of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,<sup>1</sup> and the UN Secretary-General<sup>2</sup> for resulting in human rights and IHL violations when used domestically and in the Saudi-led

The *ATT Monitor* is produced by the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) daily during all ATT meetings.

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



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## Editorial, continued

military intervention in Yemen. A UN panel investigating the Saudi-led bombing campaign in Yemen has uncovered "widespread and systematic" attacks on civilian targets in violation of international humanitarian law.<sup>3</sup> When explosive weapons were used in populated areas in Yemen, civilians made up 95% of reported deaths and injuries.<sup>4</sup>

States parties including Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, and signatories Turkey and the United States, all transferred weapons to Saudi Arabia in 2014.<sup>5</sup> Several of these continued to issue export licences to Saudi Arabia in 2015. Figures released in April 2016, for example, show that the UK government has issued 122 licences for military exports to Saudi Arabia since began its military intervention in Yemen in March 2015,<sup>6</sup> signing off £3.3 billion of arms exports in the first year of the war.<sup>7</sup> In June 2015, France signed deals with Saudi Arabia worth \$12 billion, including \$500 million for 23 Airbus H145 helicopters.<sup>8</sup> In October 2015, France signed a military, trade, and economic cooperation deal with Saudi Arabia worth \$11.4 billion.<sup>9</sup>

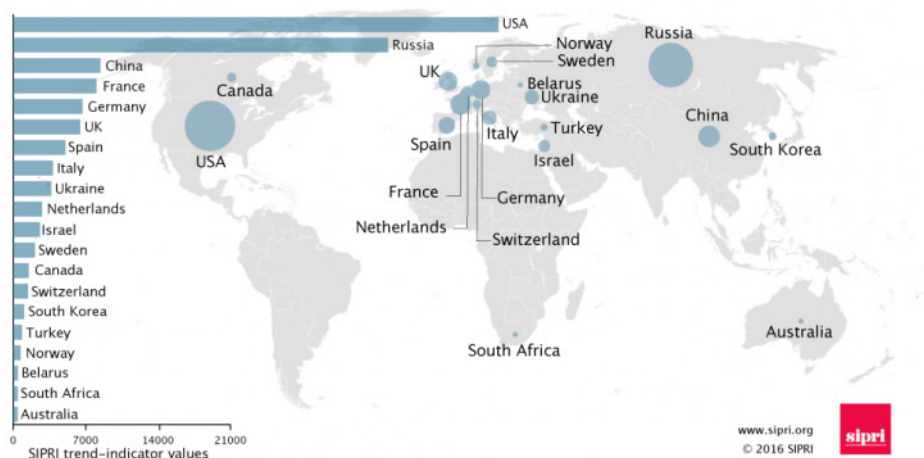
ATT states parties, by acceding to the Treaty, have acknowledged their extraterritorial obligations to prevent human rights and IHL violations that occur with the weapons they transfer. They must stand up and meet the obligations they have accepted to prevent such violations. And they must challenge those that fail to do so.

*Reaching Critical Will, as always, will provide daily coverage of the meeting with this ATT Monitor. We will also post all statements, documents, and other materials on our website as it become available. To receive our daily reports by email, subscribe at [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/subscribe](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/subscribe).*

## Notes

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3. Ewen MacAskill, "UN report into Saudi-led strikes in Yemen raises questions over UK role," *The Guardian*, 27 January 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/27/un-report-into-saudi-led-strikes-in-yemen-raises-questions-over-uk-role>.
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9. Ibid., Karthick Arvinth, "France and Saudi Arabia sign agreements worth €10bn," *International Business Times*, 14 October 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/france-saudi-arabia-sign-agreements-worth-10bn-1523910>.

The 20 largest arms exporters 2011–15



## REFLECTIONS ON RESOLUTION 1325, DISARMAMENT, AND COLOMBIAN WOMEN

Marta Bautista | PeaceWomen programme of WILPF with Katherine Ronderos | WILPF Colombia

*“In the final steps of the peace negotiations taking place in Havana, it is not only important to use a gender perspective when addressing the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process, but also the high level of arms trade in the country inside and outside the armed conflict. Disarmament is not only DDR; many femicide in Colombia are committed with small arms and light weapons. We look beyond the peace agreement being negotiated in Havana to the post-agreement scenario in order to highlight the harm that the uncontrolled trade of arms has on society in general and particularly in women’s lives.” - Katherine Ronderos, Director, WILPF Colombia*

The just-launched report titled *Disarming life: reflections on resolution 1325, disarmament, and Colombian women* by WILPF Colombia (LIMPAL in Spanish) aims at integrating the theoretical framework based on international law instruments—mainly the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda—and its link to disarmament, demilitarization, and small arms trade in the possible post-conflict scenario in Colombia. This approach is based on the view of women’s organizations that have been working for years to point out the specific need to add a gender and a women’s rights perspective in peace-building efforts.

The report addresses disarmament in Colombia on two levels. Firstly, at the national level, disarmament is viewed as the laying down of arms by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army (FARC-EP) following the disarmament process set at the peace talks in Havana. The monitoring process of disarmament will be tripartite, involving the United Nations, the Colombian Government, and FARC-EP. Secondly, at the international level, disarmament and arms control must be addressed through the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) framework, which the Colombian government has already signed but still needs to be ratified by its Congress.

The report follows the international women, peace and security agenda, presenting UN Security Council resolution 1325, its related resolutions, and the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee to Colombia, and presents disarmament from a gendered perspective. Secondly, the report shows national and international women’s perspectives and experiences around disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes and brings important recommendations to take into account the current design of the DDR process in Colombia. Finally, an analysis of disarmament in the future post-conflict scenario in Colombia is presented. The analysis is based on women’s perspec-

tives on women’s relationship with arms, bringing into the debate the importance of the ATT as a key international tool to regulate the arms trade in Colombia. Statistics included in the report reflect the large amount of government expenditure in arms and the little regulation for permits to possess and carry weapons. WILPF Colombia hopes that the large amount of arms in circulation will be reduced once the ATT is ratified and has entered into force in Colombia.

Final recommendations, from various women’s organizations and human rights institutions consulted in the research process include:

- **Respect and uphold the international treaties in order to guarantee a successful post-conflict scenario.** This includes the ratification of the ATT, of which full and effective implementation can contribute to the reduction of armed violence and to achieve human security.

- **Women should be included in all levels of decision-making in the peace process from the beginning.** This includes the DDR process of women and men who fought during the armed conflict, which is challenging. Furthermore, the DDR process must include a gender perspective.

- **Updating the requirements for permits to possess and carry arms,** which includes checking the background of weapon purchasers for violence against women and domestic violence.

All in all, the report aims at presenting ideal disarmament scenarios in Colombia based on women’s recommendations and women’s needs in the context of the ongoing peace process as well as in the international framework set by UNSCR 1325, in order to achieve a sustainable peace scenario in the country.

The report can be downloaded at <http://www.limpal-colombia.org>. •

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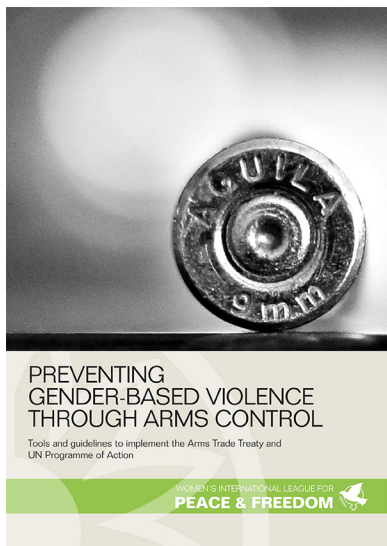
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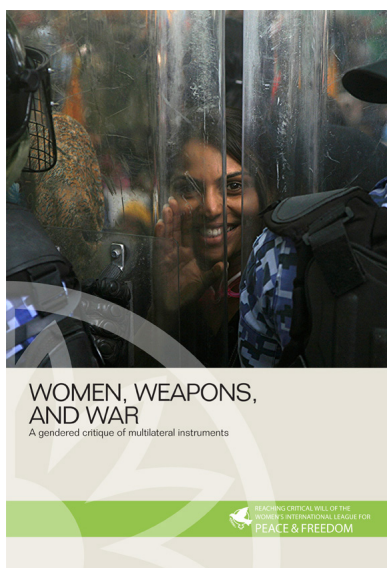
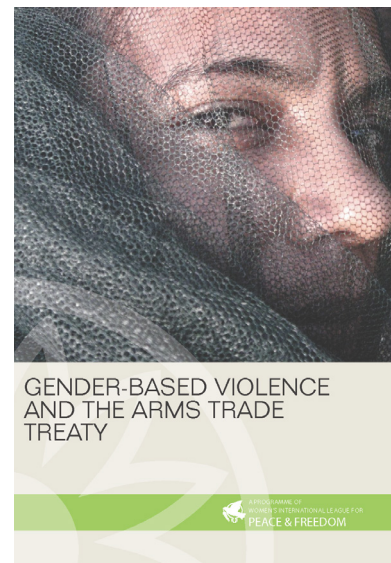


## REACHING CRITICAL WILL PUBLICATIONS ON THE ARMS TRADE



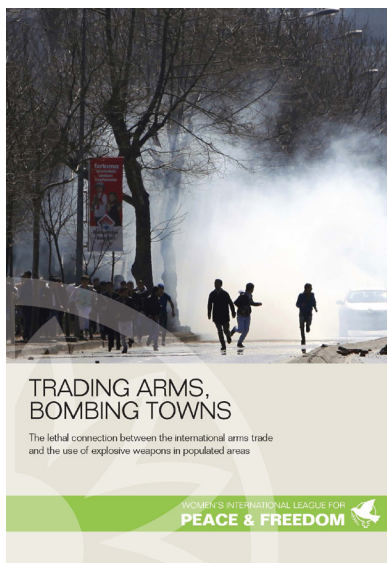
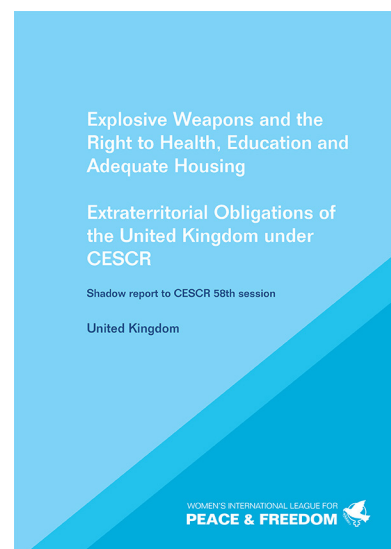
This report provides tools and guidelines for effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons provisions related to gender-based violence. We have also published two related case studies, on arms transfers from Sweden and Spain.

This briefing paper aims to provide some background on the terminology around gender-based violence and to highlight questions that will be relevant for risk assessments under article 6 and 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty.



This publication considers synergies—and contradictions—related to gender and women in a number of multilateral resolutions, treaties, and commitments on conventional weapons and women's rights and participation, including the Arms Trade Treaty.

Together with WILPF's Human Rights programme, Reaching Critical Will prepared three briefs to the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights on the transfer of weapons from France, Sweden, and the United Kingdom to Saudi Arabia and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in Yemen.



This briefing paper looks at the lethal connection between the international arms trade and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and makes recommendations to governments and others on policy and practice.

