



FOSDA Calls on President Bush to Support Arms Trade Treaty

The Foundation for Security and Development in Africa is calling on President George Bush to support the Arms Trade Treaty as he visits Ghana from February 19 -21, 2008. The United States is currently one of the key states strongly opposed to the Treaty.

The Arms Trade Treaty is a global arms control framework which aims at producing international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, not only small arms and light weapons.

With no international legally binding agreement on the transfer of arms, weapons can move easily across the world to regions of conflict and to countries known for human rights abuses. These weapons are fuelling, sustaining conflicts, destroying lives and undermining development. Hence, there is the need for coordinated mechanism or global criteria to be used in a harmonised fashion and applied equally to all arms exporters and importers.

Africa has been at the losing end where conflicts have claimed the lives of over four million people over the last decade and continues to destroy economies. Conflicts have also caused Africa approximately \$300billion between 1990 and 2005 in terms of development.

With a treaty in place, it would require states to adopt and implement national mechanisms requiring the express authorisation of international transfer of arms. Furthermore, it would prohibit the transfer of arms that could be used to seriously violate internationally established standards of human rights, international humanitarian law and non-aggression agreements. Also, it would require exporting states to take into account the effect that transferred weapon could have on sustainable development, regional peace and security or the commission of violent crimes.

This would mean that Ghana, Africa and the world in general will be free from the millions of ammunitions produced illegally. There will also be stricter control on such weapons which have fuelled violent conflicts on the continent, state repression, crime and domestic abuse.

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