

Including Small Arms and Light Weapons and Ammunition in the Scope of the Arms Trade Treaty

In order to save lives and improve human security, it is vital to regulate the global trade in all conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition. This is achievable through a global, legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that encompasses SALW in its scope of weapons. If an ATT is going to be effective it is vital SALW and ammunition is included.

Find out what your country said on the inclusion of SALW in the ATT

Ongoing discussions at the United Nations are underway to define the text of the ATT. A complete summary of what states have said about the inclusion of SALW at the first two UN Preparatory Committees (12-23 July 2010) are summarised and available for download at:

<http://bit.ly/fHpxE7>

Examples of statements on the inclusion of SALW at UN Preparatory Committee 12-23 July 2010.

Brazil "We continue to advocate for an instrument that applies to the seven categories of the UN Register of Conventional Arms, as well as to SALW and their ammunition."

The Philippines believes that the scope of the ATT should encompass the seven categories covered by the UN Register of Conventional Arms as well as Small Arms and Light Weapons

Australia (on behalf of the Pacific Island Countries): "Island States have taken their own regional and national initiatives in an effort to address the root causes of illicit trafficking in SALW, and believe these efforts can be further strengthened and reinforced through an ATT."

ECOWAS: As for its scope, the ATT should cover the seven categories of the UN Conventional Arms Register, SALW and Ammunition.

Morocco: "[Morocco] is located in two troubled regions that pay a high toll because of illicit trafficking of SALW. Africa and the Middle East face tremendous security challenges which makes it all the more important that an ATT comes to fruition in the earliest time possible".

Basic Standards for Arms Transfers

An effective ATT must ensure stronger controls of international transfers of SALW and ammunition. IANSA, as member of the Control Arms Campaign, is asking states to ensure that 3 essential minimum standards are met before authorising a transfer of weapons.

States should not authorise a weapons transfer if the weapons are likely to

- be used to commit or facilitate serious Human Rights violations
- be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of International Humanitarian Law
- seriously impair poverty reduction and socio-economic development

The widespread availability of SALW in many areas facilitates abuse of these 3 parameters. The ATT would therefore be an a cornerstone in the construction of peace, the advancement of human security and the achievement of development goals as well as an important contribution in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and small arms control.

Upcoming Advocacy Opportunities

28 February-4 March 2011 UN Preparatory Committee, New York

13-19 June Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence

11-15 July 2011 UN Preparatory Committee, New York

02-27 July 2012 UN Negotiating Conference, New York – Text for an ATT is agreed

Actions

- Remind your government about the devastating impact of SALW and ammunition, and the need for regulation through inclusion in the scope of the ATT;
- Speak to your government before the events listed above and ask them to actively support the inclusion of SALW and ammunition in the scope of an ATT;
- Reiterate to your government its commitment to SALW control through the UN Programme of Action (UNPoA);
- Plan your event for the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence and join IANSA members around the world to highlight the need to include SALW and ammunition in the scope of the ATT.

Key Terms

7+1+1 - This is a shorthand reference to the 'UN Register of Conventional Arms + SALW + Ammunition' and is problematic because its very limited and does not include all of the arms that should be included in the ATT.

Human Rights (HR) The basic rights and freedoms to which everyone in the world are entitled at all times, including the rights to life, protection from torture, cruel and degrading treatment and arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom of thought and expression, equality before the law, work, education, development and self-determination.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) - A set of rules which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare. International humanitarian law is also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict.

Scope of weapons - The type and range of weapons that will be included in an ATT.

Scope of transfer -The type and range of transactions that the ATT will cover

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) - "Broadly speaking, small arms are those weapons designed for personal use" They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns "Light weapons are those designed for use by several persons serving as a crew." See 1997 UN Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms

UN Register of Conventional Arms - All UN Member States are called upon, on a voluntary basis, to provide annual data on imports and exports of conventional arms in the 7 categories covered under the Register, which are: battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles and missile launchers.