



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday 15 July 2005 10:00 am GMT

THIRTEEN MORE GOVERNMENTS ANNOUNCE SUPPORT FOR ARMS TRADE TREATY

In the last week thirteen more governments have announced their support for the international Arms Trade Treaty at a UN arms control meeting in New York. The governments of Benin, Colombia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, the Netherlands, Norway, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Turkey, Uganda and the Vatican gave their support, bringing the treaty much closer to being a reality, said campaigners today.

A number of other governments, including the EU countries, some East African states and the Mercosur grouping of Latin American states also made positive statements in favour of stronger export controls based on global minimum standards.

The proposed Arms Trade Treaty has the support of Nobel Laureates and citizens around the world. It would be legally binding and would ban arms transfers if they are likely to contribute to human rights violations or fuel conflict, or undermine development. The treaty would close the loopholes that currently exists between incompatible national arms export laws.

The new expressions of support for the Arms Trade Treaty came during a week-long conference at the UN in New York to review progress in curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons under a 2001 agreement, the UN Programme of Action.

“While many governments are still failing to meet their obligations under the Programme, it is encouraging that momentum is building towards the agreement of a new legally binding treaty on export controls,” said Brian Wood, arms control manager of Amnesty International.

“Governments at last seem to be waking up to the fact that hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are killed every year by armed violence. So many governments backing the treaty in just one week is a massive step towards enforcing stricter arms controls,” said Anna MacDonald, Director of Policy at Oxfam.

“This is a major shift from the last UN review meeting two years ago, when export controls were barely on the table. As a result of strong campaigning from a global network of NGOs, along with the support of states including Kenya, UK, Costa Rica, Norway and Finland, states are recognising the necessity of a legally binding treaty,” said Rebecca Peters, Director of IANSA.

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