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Control Arms Campaign: 77 governments champion resolution for an Arms Trade Treaty

Control Arms Campaign: Amnesty International, Oxfam International and the International Action Network on Small Arms

In a massive show of support for stronger arms controls at the United Nations in New York, 77 governments co-sponsored a resolution tabled today to start work on a global Arms Trade Treaty. Many more governments are expected to back the initiative in the coming days. The resolution will be debated tomorrow in the United Nations' First Committee and will proceed to a vote in the final week of October.

Several emerging exporters of weapons including Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria have pledged their support for an Arms Trade Treaty for the first time today. Other first time supporters include countries that have been devastated by armed violence including Colombia, East Timor, Haiti, Liberia and Rwanda.

"Today we've seen the call for the Arms Trade Treaty transformed into action. Governments were given their first opportunity to endorse the resolution to start work on a Treaty, and they queued to sign up," said Anna Macdonald, Oxfam International's Control Arms Campaign Manager.

The resolution enjoyed widespread support across Africa, Latin America and Europe. The Canadian, South African and Brazilian governments are among those who have previously expressed support for an Arms Trade Treaty, and are expected to co-sponsor the resolution.

"The Arms Trade Treaty is gathering momentum. Straggler governments have ten days to get on board. This groundswell of support must not be held back by a few sceptical states," said Brian Wood, Amnesty International's Research Manager, Control Arms Campaign.

Amnesty International, Oxfam International and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) have joined forces to campaign for an Arms Trade Treaty based on respect for international law, especially human rights and humanitarian law. The campaign, which is supported by 20 Nobel Peace laureates, has been working towards this vote for three years.

"Since we started the Control Arms Campaign three years ago, it is estimated that over a million people have been killed by guns and other small arms. Governments must get behind the Arms Trade Treaty," said Mark Marge, IANSA's UN Representative.

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