

AI Index: PRE 01/491/2013  
24 September 2013

## **US set to sign Arms Trade Treaty**

Following reports that Secretary of State John Kerry will sign the Arms Trade Treaty on behalf of the USA on Wednesday morning, Salil Shetty, Amnesty International's Secretary General commented:

*"This is a milestone towards ending the flow of conventional arms that fuel atrocities and abuse. The US is the world's largest arms dealer, but has so far had a mixed record of suspending arms supplies on human rights grounds.*

*"We now need to see this commitment by the US - and the 86 other countries that have signed the Arms Trade Treaty - matched by action. They must implement the Treaty and bring to an end the supply of weapons to countries where they would be used to commit or facilitate genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other serious human rights violations.*

*"The tragic situation in Syria underlines the horrific human cost of the reckless global arms trade. The Arms Trade Treaty is the opportunity to prevent such human suffering in the future. Governments must seize this once in a lifetime opportunity. The world is now waiting for China and Russia to match the US commitment."*

Salil Shetty is available for interview from the United Nations in New York, where he is due to address a high level event on the Arms Trade Treaty on Wednesday. Amnesty International's other experts on the arms trade are available from London.

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### Key facts and figures

- At least 500,000 people die every year on average and millions more individuals are displaced and abused as result of armed violence and conflict,
- The United States is by far the world's largest arms trader, accounting for around 30 per cent of conventional arms transfers in terms of value.
- The USA supplies arms to more than 170 countries and has a mixed record of suspending arms supplies on human rights grounds:

As the main arms supplier to Egypt, the USA authorized the sale of small arms as well as millions of rounds of ammunition and riot-control chemical agents despite the security forces' violent crackdown on protesters in 2011.

Yemen was also supplied with small arms, chemical agents and armoured vehicles, and Bahrain with small arms. Elsewhere, the US Department of State has continued to provide the Colombian security

forces with arms through US military aid and training, despite their persistent violations of human rights.

- 86 countries have signed the ATT to date. Many – including key arms-producing countries in the European Union – are in the process of ratifying the ATT. Shortly after 50 countries have ratified the treaty it will enter into force.

For the full list of countries that have signed the ATT please click [here](#)

## Background

Amnesty International has campaigned since the early 1990s to achieve robust, legally binding global rules on international arms transfers to stem the flow of conventional arms and munitions that fuel atrocities and abuse. Amnesty International believes that the Arms Trade Treaty represents a significant step towards this goal and provides a firm foundation to better regulate the international flow of weapons.

The ATT prohibits states from transferring conventional weapons to countries when they know those weapons would be used to commit or facilitate genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

The Treaty also obligates all governments to assess the risk of transferring arms, ammunition or components to another country where they could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Where that overriding risk is real and cannot be mitigated, states have agreed the transfer will not go forward.

For further information on Amnesty International's campaign for an Arms Trade Treaty click [here](#)

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