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INTERNATIONAL



DANGEROUS AND DEADLY ARMS TRADE



NO MORE ARMS FOR ATROCITIES

Hundreds of thousands of people are killed, injured, raped, repressed and forced to flee their homes every year as a result of the international arms trade. Families are torn apart. Livelihoods and lives are destroyed.

Armed conflicts destroy social and economic infrastructure, breed corruption and divert public finances, denying the poor access to health care, water, food, shelter and education, increasing poverty and causing yet more deaths.

For decades there has been a global treaty on the import, export and transfer of dinosaur bones yet there is no global treaty to strictly control the deadly trade in conventional arms.

Revolvers, rifles, machine guns, bullets, hand grenades, missiles, rockets, armoured vehicles and other weapons and arms can be traded between governments, arms dealers and armed groups with few restrictions. Unscrupulous governments allow almost unlimited amounts of arms to be supplied to those flagrantly violating human rights and destroying lives.

Regulation at the country level has failed to adapt to an increasingly globalized trade – components are sourced from across the world, and production and assembly take place in different countries.

It's time for all governments to commit to securing an international Arms Trade Treaty.

[amnesty.org/control-arms](https://www.amnesty.org/control-arms)

EXISTING PROHIBITIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

Under international law, states can only sell, acquire and possess arms for legitimate security, law-enforcement and self-defence needs.

An Arms Trade Treaty must require that governments refuse arms transfers when those arms are likely to facilitate human rights violations or be diverted in breach of a UN arms embargo. Those violating such embargoes should be held accountable.

An Arms Trade Treaty must also prohibit governments from transferring weapons, munitions or related equipment when they are likely to be used to commit or facilitate war crimes or crimes against humanity, including acts of genocide.

Bosniak refugees push their elderly in wheelbarrows as they flee Srebrenica, where nearly 8,000 Muslims – mainly men and boys – were killed by members of the Serbian army in an act of genocide. Potocari, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 1995.

Human rights abuses committed during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina were the most serious witnessed in Europe since the Second World War. All sides in the conflict deliberately targeted civilians; abductions, enforced disappearance, detention without charge or trial, killings, torture – including rape – and mass forced displacement were all commonplace.



A girl stands on a wall of a house destroyed during fighting between government forces and Shi'a rebels in the north-western Yemeni city of Sa'dah, February 2012.

Weeks of heavy bombardment in Sa'dah during late 2009 and early 2010 by Saudi Arabian and Yemeni forces reportedly killed hundreds of people. There was widespread damage to homes, mosques, schools, local industries and infrastructure and more than a quarter of a million people were internally displaced. Between 2005 and 2009 the biggest supplier of military weapons to Yemen was the USA.





INDISCRIMINATE BOMBING

The Arms Trade Treaty must stop the delivery of bombs and artillery shells to armed forces and armed groups who persistently and indiscriminately bomb civilian areas.

GRAVE ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Under the Arms Trade Treaty, governments must also ensure that arms are not delivered or diverted to armed opposition groups that commit grave abuses of human rights or war crimes.

Relatives of Serb Mirko Milošević approach the spot outside his home where he was killed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Bukos, Kosovo, February 1999. The snow has turned red with his blood.

Both sides in the Kosovo conflict committed grave human rights abuses in 1999. The vast majority of victims were ethnic Albanians, but Serbs also suffered abuses at the hands of armed groups, such as the KLA.

At least 60 per cent of human rights violations documented by Amnesty International have involved the use of small arms and light weapons.

Ethnic Albanian armed opposition groups, particularly in the ethnic Albanian diaspora communities of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, trafficked substantial numbers of weapons in the Balkans in the late 1990s.

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A Palestinian child stands in a bomb crater in Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territories, January 2009.

During Israel's devastating bombing campaign on the Gaza Strip in 2008-2009, Israeli F-16 combat aircraft targeted and destroyed civilian homes without warning, killing and injuring scores of people, often while they slept. Munitions transferred from the USA to the Israeli Defense Force were used in the attacks.



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EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

The Arms Trade Treaty must require governments to refuse international transfers of riot control weapons and munitions where they are likely to be used by security forces with excessive force, resulting in deaths or injuries.





Protesters react after police use a “flashbang” stun grenade during an anti-government rally in Manama, Bahrain, April 2012.

Despite the Bahrain government's insistence that it will learn from its heavy-handed response to mass protests in February and March 2011, reports of torture and unnecessary and excessive use of force against protesters continue. At least 60 people have been killed in connection with the protests since February 2011.

US-made tear gas canisters and baton rounds were found in the aftermath of the 17 February 2011 raid by Bahraini riot police on peaceful protests. The USA has since resumed arms sales to Bahrain, despite the ongoing human rights violations committed by the Bahraini authorities.



POORLY TRAINED POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES

Police officers charge towards a garment worker during a protest in Dhaka, Bangladesh, July 2010. Bangladesh's police and security forces have used excessive force against demonstrators systematically.

In spite of this, China, the Russian Federation and the USA, among others, continue to supply them with arms.

Police and security forces are more likely to commit serious human rights violations when they are poorly trained or unaccountable. Consequently, weapons, munitions or associated equipment must not be authorized until the institutions have been fully reformed and perpetrators brought to justice.



DISPLACEMENT

At the end of 2010, 43.3 million people were displaced due to armed conflict and persecution, according to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency.

The Arms Trade Treaty must prevent international transfers of conventional arms that provoke or prolong armed conflict and contribute to displacement.

Displaced people wait for their daily food ration during a sand storm at the Chota Lahore refugee camp at Swabi, north-west Pakistan, June 2009. At least a million people remain displaced by the brutal conflict between the Taliban and Pakistani forces, in which all sides have failed to adequately distinguish between civilians and combatants.

Pakistani forces have received billions of dollars in military aid over the last 10 years, primarily from the USA, while the Taliban have benefited from a thriving black market in arms.

ARMED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The actions of armed groups can define public spaces for women. If armed groups are on the street and are known to attack and rape women, then even simple, daily activities like getting to work become dangerous.

The Arms Trade Treaty must prevent the transfer or export of arms when there is a substantial risk that they will be used to further gender-based armed violence and sexual violence against women.

A woman cradles her baby in an overcrowded camp for displaced people in Somalia, while an armed man looks on in the background. Mogadishu, Somalia, September 2011.

According to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, 1.5 million Somalis were internally displaced at the end of 2011 as a result of the longstanding civil war. Women and girls are especially vulnerable in the camps and have been raped and attacked, sometimes by men in Transitional Federal Government uniforms.





CHILD SOLDIERS

A child soldier of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda in Ntoto, Walikale territory, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), January 2012.

In 2010, an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 children were serving in the conflict in eastern DRC. They continue to be recruited by armed groups and state armed forces, despite the government having formally ended child recruitment in 2004.

Those who recruit children are rarely brought to account, and those who are convicted often escape, in some cases returning to the armed forces.

In 2011, child soldiers enlisted by government forces or armed groups were involved in conflicts in at least 14 countries; in many other countries, children were forced to join armed criminal gangs.

Apart from the tragedy of themselves becoming perpetrators of human rights violations, many child soldiers are killed, maimed or are victims of rape and other sexual violence.

PERVASIVE ARMED VIOLENCE

An Arms Trade Treaty would prevent transfers where there is credible and reliable evidence that the arms will be used to commit acts of “armed violence”, and where there are serious violations or abuses of international law. This would enable states to improve human security and the work of law enforcement bodies.

International arms transfers should be assessed under an Arms Trade Treaty against the risk of being diverted to fuel persistent or pervasive armed violence or organized crime.

Diseth Aguiar weeps over the body of her husband, 34-year-old Corporal Alberto Jimenez Arocha, who was killed with a shot to the head while someone tried to steal his weapon in the San José neighbourhood of Petare, Venezuela, October 2009. In the 12 months from June 2008, 79 per cent of homicides in Venezuela involved firearms.

In 2010 alone, nearly half of all homicides around the world involved firearms. Systemic armed violence is often fuelled by firearms and ammunition supplied either directly to criminals, or to legal but poorly regulated markets.





CONTROL ALL AMMUNITION

A child holds up bullets collected from the ground in the village of Rounyn, north of Shangil Tobaya, North Darfur, March 2011. Most of Rounyn's residents have fled to displacement camps following clashes between the government and armed groups in the area.

Existing arms export controls and a UN arms embargo on Darfur have failed to stop international arms transfers to Sudan. Despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis, arms from Belarus, China and the Russian Federation have repeatedly been deployed.

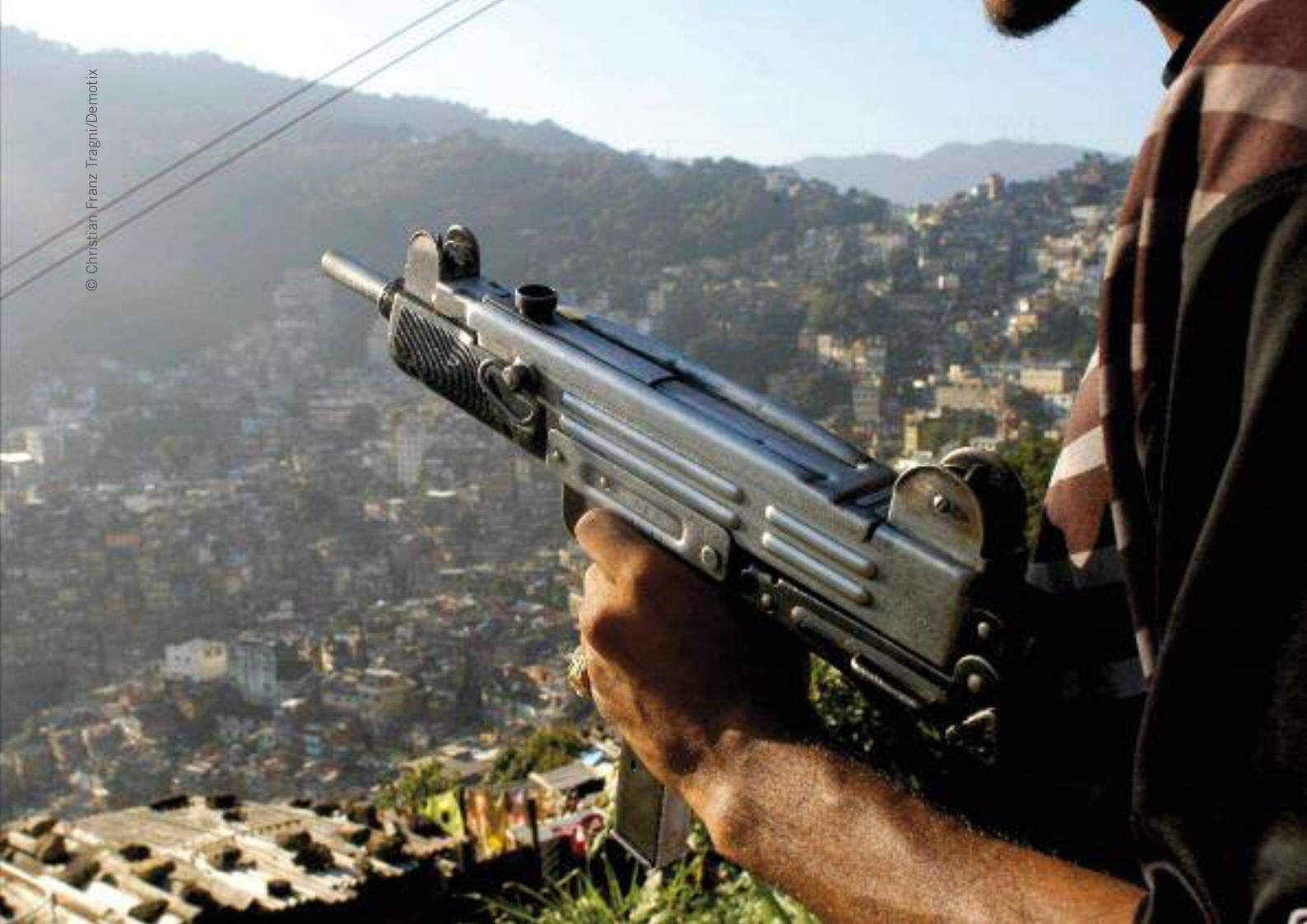
It is critical that all munitions, including ammunition, rockets, bombs and other explosives fall within the scope of the Arms Trade Treaty, in spite of a bid by some governments to exclude ammunition.

UNDERMINING POVERTY REDUCTION

International transfers of conventional arms can seriously impair poverty reduction and undermine socio-economic development. As conflict or lawlessness takes hold, countries slide into chaos, causing development to grind to a halt. This can be seen in non-conflict situations, but also when easily available arms are used unlawfully in post-conflict peace-building, or when they involve excessive, unaccountable spending or corruption.

A member of the Amigos dos Amigos (ADA) holds an Uzi submachine gun, Rocinha favela, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, February 2009. The ADA is one of three main criminal armed groups in the city, where gangs and militias made up of corrupt former police use violence and intimidation to control favelas.

The spread of conventional arms among criminal gang networks undermines development and prevents people from rising out of poverty.





A policeman sprays tear gas at protesters during a student rally in Athens, Greece, December 2008. Protesters hurled firebombs at police outside parliament on the 13th day of protests after police killed a teenager.

Amnesty International has documented several cases of police using excessive force and the excessive use of chemicals and tear gas during demonstrations in Greece in 2012.

Weapons such as tear gas and stun grenades are widely used by police in Europe and elsewhere but the way they are deployed often falls short of international standards. In Greece, these weapons have been supplied by Brazilian, German, UK and US companies.

Weapons and munitions used by police and internal security forces must be covered by the Arms Trade Treaty.

ROBUST CONTROL MECHANISMS

The global market place for arms is a complex environment. Transactions often involve many different suppliers, agents, brokers and transporters – sometimes operating from several different jurisdictions. An Arms Trade Treaty must require governments to register all parties involved and strictly regulate all international transfers.

Members of Sudan's military delegation inspect a rocket system at the MILEX-2011 arms and military equipment exhibition in Minsk, Belarus, May 2011.

Many countries continue to supply arms to governments, security and police forces known to commit human rights violations or abuse.





An Antonov 12 cargo aircraft takes off from a remote airstrip in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, September 2003. This kind of aircraft has often been used to deliver weapons to embargoed conflict zones in many parts of the world.

In Africa's Great Lakes region, Goma has been a hub for this activity. In many parts of the continent, the illicit arms trade has contributed to violence, corruption and poverty.

The Arms Trade Treaty must include robust provisions to control the physical movement of arms across international borders. It should require all states to impose effective controls on the transport and transporters of arms, including through Free Trade Zones.

Without this, the Treaty will fail to address a significant loophole in international arms transfer controls, and will deprive the international community of a key tool to prevent arms transfers from being used to commit and facilitate serious violations of human rights.

WEAPONS PROLIFERATION

Globally, a wide range of conventional arms have been used by government forces and armed groups in attacks designed to kill and intimidate civilians. Some of these arms have been diverted illegally; others have been supplied with the knowledge or complicity of states and their agents. The Arms Trade Treaty must forbid such transfers.

An anti-Gaddafi fighter looks at weapons left by Colonel Mu'ammār al-Gaddafi's forces in Misrata, Libya, October 2011. Under Colonel al-Gaddafi, violations of human rights were routine and included arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, unlawful killings and deaths in custody.

The risk of arms being used for serious human rights violations in Libya under Colonel al-Gaddafi was substantial. Yet many states, including Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Russian Federation and the UK, supplied the country with weapons.





SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A riot policeman fires a shotgun at protesters during clashes in a side street near Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, November 2011. More than 6,000 people were injured in connection with the “25 January Revolution” in 2011, some of them permanently. At least 840 people were killed.

The USA is the biggest arms supplier to Egypt, and has continued to transfer arms there in spite of the numerous human rights abuses committed since the beginning of the revolution. More than 100 people have been killed as a result of excessive and lethal force by security forces since October 2011.

Outside armed conflict, even if it is unclear whether crimes against humanity will be committed, governments still have an international obligation to stop arms transfers to military, security or police forces who are known to commit serious international human rights violations. These rules are essential for an effective Arms Trade Treaty.

IT'S TIME FOR A BULLET-PROOF ARMS TRADE TREATY

Amnesty International, alongside NGO partners and activists around the world, has been campaigning for an Arms Trade Treaty since the early 1990s. It was 2009 before the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to develop a Treaty to regulate the international arms trade.

In July 2012, states will at last meet to agree the Treaty at a four-week-long UN Conference. Every government has an interest in the outcome.

However, the world's largest arms traders – including the USA, the European Union (especially France, Germany and the UK), the Russian Federation and China – wield the most influence and there is a real danger that China, the Russian Federation and the USA will push for the Treaty text to be watered

down until it is ineffective. Some states in the Middle East and Asia may even veto the Treaty.

We must keep up the pressure on states to adopt a Treaty that will save lives and help protect human rights.

After July, we will campaign even harder to make sure states ratify and comply with the Arms Trade Treaty.

KEEP WEAPONS OUT OF THE WRONG HANDS

Governments must stamp out irresponsible arms transfers and keep weapons out of the wrong hands. Amnesty International is calling on governments to adopt, ratify and implement a treaty that will:

- Stop arms getting into the hands of people likely to commit war crimes, genocide, mass rape, torture, displacement and other grave human rights abuses.
- Control all arms, ammunition and components parts.
- End secrecy, corruption and wasted resources.
- Be enforced and policed, and hold governments to account.

**Find our more and take urgent
action: [amnesty.org/control-arms](https://www.amnesty.org/control-arms)**

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Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members and activists in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

NO MORE ARMS FOR ATROCITIES OR ABUSE

TAKE ACTION

Visit [amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org) or contact your local Amnesty International office to find out how you can help



Cover image: Somali children stare at a Transitional Federal Government soldier carrying a machine gun ammunition belt while on patrol in Burgabo, south of Kismayu in Somalia, December 2011.

Civilians have been targeted many times during Somalia's armed conflict by government forces and armed Islamist groups. A UN arms embargo in place since 1992 has been repeatedly violated thanks to its built-in government exemptions and ineffective arms controls in other countries.

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