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## **UN: Iran, North Korea and Syria cynically block lifesaving arms treaty**

In a deeply cynical move, Iran, North Korea and Syria have thwarted the adoption of an Arms Trade Treaty aimed at prohibiting states from transferring conventional weapons to countries when they know those weapons will be used to commit or facilitate genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, Amnesty International said today from the United Nations in New York.

All three countries are under some form of sanctions, including arms embargoes, and have abysmal human rights records – having even used arms against their own citizens. The atrocities they have committed are precisely the type that the draft treaty aims to prevent.

“While the President of the Diplomatic Conference will be able to take the draft treaty to the General Assembly for adoption during the current session, Iran, North Korea and Syria’s decision to prevent it being adopted unanimously at the treaty conference is unconscionable,” said Brian Wood, Head of Arms Control and Human Rights at Amnesty International, currently in New York.

“States must move forward with adopting this treaty as soon as possible. The resolution which created this diplomatic conference envisioned that if states failed to reach consensus, the General Assembly would act on this matter. Kenya, speaking on behalf of 11 other key states, has endorsed precisely this action.”

The draft treaty would obligate 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.

“By vetoing this historic document, Iran, North Korea and Syria demonstrate the challenges civil society and supportive governments faced during the negotiations. In campaigning for this treaty, we called upon states to save lives and reduce human suffering and, fortunately, most governments heeded the call,” said Widney Brown, Senior Director of International Law and Policy at Amnesty International.

It is expected that the draft treaty will be adopted by the General Assembly during the current session, but by destroying consensus, Iran, North Korea and Syria showed how fragile these agreements are.

Despite overwhelming support for the treaty, some states still use huge economic interest, the exercise of political power and even claims of sovereignty to justify acts that are patently reprehensible such as the targeting and killing of their own citizens.