

THE ARMS TRADE TIME FOR ACTION

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Half a million people die every year as a result of armed violence. Millions more are injured, brutally repressed, raped or forced to flee from their homes because of armed conflict, armed violence and human rights violations using conventional arms.

A DEADLY AND DANGEROUS TRADE

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, perpetuating poverty and causing yet more deaths.

Yet no global treaty currently exists to control the international trade in conventional weapons, munitions and armaments. 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 volumes of arms to be supplied to those flagrantly violating human rights and destroying lives and livelihoods across the world.

Improving individual governments' control of international arms transfers alone is not enough. To secure sustained positive impact on human rights, the overwhelming majority of

states must agree common legally binding standards that stop irresponsible arms trades and transfers. This can only happen with a strong and comprehensive UN Arms Trade Treaty.

In the 1990s Amnesty International, along with NGO partners, first envisaged an Arms Trade Treaty, and in 2003 launched a campaign to make it a reality. We have already had two landmark victories: in 2006 the UN started a global consultation process for an Arms Trade Treaty and in 2009 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to develop a "strong and robust" Arms Trade Treaty to effectively regulate the international arms trade.

Now states will finally negotiate the Treaty at a four-week-long UN Conference in July 2012. But its shape and content will be determined globally by political decision-making in national capital cities. As all states import arms, and most transit them across their territory and export them to a greater or lesser extent, every government will have an interest in the outcome. However, the world's largest arms traders – including

the USA, the European Union (especially France, Germany and the UK), Russia and China – wield the most influence. There is a real danger that China, Russia and the USA will push for the Treaty text to be watered down and rendered ineffective. Some states in the Middle East and Asia are even threatening to veto the creation of the Treaty.

Now is the time to keep up the pressure to make sure that all states turn their words into action and adopt a Treaty that protects human rights and saves lives.

But the work doesn't stop in July. We know that once the Arms Trade Treaty is adopted, we will need to apply further pressure globally to ensure that as many states as possible ratify the Treaty and comply with it, and that the states that don't are held to account.

Since 1989, 131 armed conflicts between states have killed 50,000 people per year

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Bullets collected in Rounyn, a village in north Darfur, Sudan, March 2011. Villagers have taken refuge in camps for displaced people after fleeing violence between the government and armed groups.

Since 1989, 392 armed conflicts involving armed groups have killed 7,000 people per year

NO ARMS FOR ATROCITIES OR ABUSES

Governments must stamp out irresponsible arms transfers in order to keep weapons out of the wrong hands and prevent war crimes, unlawful killings, torture, gender-based armed violence and other serious human rights abuses. Amnesty International is running a multi-faceted and intensive campaign to mobilize international political and public opinion to put pressure 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 and ammunition and their components, and all those actors involved in their export and import;
- End secrecy and corruption in the global arms trade;
- Be enforced and policed, and hold governments to account.



The international launch of the Control Arms campaign in Trafalgar Square, London, UK, in October 2003.

Above: Hundreds of gravestones represented the half a million people who die each year from armed violence – one every minute.

Left: Activists taking photos for the Million Faces Petition.

There are an estimated 250,000 armed killings by governments, gangs and individuals every year

Over the next three years, Amnesty International will campaign to:

1. SECURE A STRONG ARMS TRADE TREATY

This means winning the agreement of a large majority of states to include rules in the Treaty to help protect human rights. Amnesty International wants a specific “Golden Rule” requiring that “States shall not authorize international transfers of conventional arms where there is a substantial risk the arms will be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights or international humanitarian law” – along with sufficient scope for the Treaty to enforce transparent reporting and strong peer review mechanisms together with robust national controls.

2. PUSH FOR TREATY RATIFICATION, ROBUST IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

After the Treaty has been adopted, Amnesty International will press globally for its ratification by as many states as possible and its implementation through risk assessments, licensing decisions, record-keeping and reporting procedures. Once ratified, states will

be required to establish and enforce criminal responsibility and sanctions on individual and corporate actors (arms traders, brokers, shippers and financiers) who violate the terms of the Treaty. Amnesty International will hold to account states that fail to enforce the Treaty.

3. CONTINUE TO PREVENT ARMS FROM FUELLING HUMAN RIGHTS CRISES

Although the Arms Trade Treaty will be a historical milestone, it will not be a panacea for all the problems associated with conventional arms. Amnesty International will continue working to ban inhumane weapons of warfare, inhumane technologies for policing and prisons and to prevent the proliferation and misuse of small arms within countries. For example, we recently exposed how conventional military and security equipment was persistently misused for excessive or unlawful use of force and other human rights violations in North Africa. We will produce human rights education materials to promote the responsible use of police weapons and to ban tools of torture, and produce case studies on small arms proliferation in Africa and Latin America.

4. BUILD AND SUSTAIN THE CAPACITY OF CAMPAIGNERS TO ENGAGE AND ACT

The arms trade issue is complex and fast-moving. It is essential that Amnesty International staff, supporters and NGO partners are equipped with specialist up-to-date information and advice to support timely, targeted and ultimately effective campaigning and advocacy. To complement the capacity of our own staff, we need the support of an experienced expert in international law to provide legal advice on the Treaty and the negotiation process, and we need field research by weapons experts to show the extent of the arms trade. We will run seminars on international law for diplomats and advocates to help them engage confidently in debates and advocacy activities. We will run capacity-building seminars on arms control and human rights in Latin America, Africa and Asia; this will ensure our activists are empowered to take popular action in support of the global campaign and to address specific local issues.

Hundreds of thousands of people are injured each year as a result of armed conflict

WE NEED URGENT ACTION NOW

With negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty reaching a peak at the UN Conference in July 2012, it is vital that we seize this historic opportunity to negotiate a Treaty that will help protect human rights and save millions of lives. After 20 years of campaigning for an effective Arms Trade Treaty, the next 24 months are very possibly the final opportunity to ensure our demands are built into the Treaty and implemented.

A number of influential states have already indicated that they will try to water down the text. They have proposed that the Treaty should only require states “to take into account” whether there is a substantial risk of human rights violations arising from an arms transfer and not include an obligation on states to veto a transfer if such a risk exists. This would render the Treaty weak and ineffective, as states supplying the perpetrators of human rights violations would have no legal obligation to stop those transfers. Many governments, such as Egypt and Syria, are pushing for the negotiations to be held behind closed doors, excluding civil society observers. This only raises

further concerns about the negotiation’s outcomes and fuels the secrecy and lack of accountability that has overshadowed the arms trade for too many years.

The recent repression in the Middle East and North Africa clearly demonstrates that a wide range of arms used by military, security and police forces must be covered by the Arms Trade Treaty. After the violent dispersal of demonstrators at Pearl Roundabout in Manama, Bahrain in 2011, Amnesty International identified that the authorities had used US-made tear gas canisters and solid rubber bullets, and French-made tear gas grenades and solid rubber “dispersion” grenades. In Egypt, the extensive use of a lethal type of shotgun ammunition by security forces has resulted in at least a hundred deaths since October 2011. If the transfer of such equipment is not covered by the Treaty, governments will continue to supply them, more lives will be endangered and more human rights violated.

Now, more than ever, world political opinion needs to be mobilized to

prevent the international arms trade from undermining global, regional and human security. Unfortunately, given the various forces ranged against it, there is no guarantee that the Treaty text will be agreed in July or that it will have robust rules vital to its effectiveness. Amnesty International must be ready to continue the Arms Trade Treaty campaign in 2013, and to continue to address the lack of arms controls which leads to human rights violations. This is why working with activists and campaigners and building their capacity is so vital.

Small arms and light weapons have been used in at least 60 per cent of human rights violations documented by Amnesty International over a 10-year period



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Protesters flee tear gas during clashes with riot police in Cairo, Egypt, November 2011.

In 2010, there were 43 million people worldwide displaced as a result of armed conflict and persecution. This included 27.5 million people internally displaced within their own country

BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS

Amnesty International has been one of the driving forces in the campaign for effective regulation of the international arms trade for the past 20 years. Year after year, we have seen the devastation caused by the proliferation and misuse of small arms and their ongoing impact on conflict-torn communities.

The concept of an Arms Trade Treaty was devised by Amnesty International, Nobel Peace Laureates and NGO partners in the 1990s. In 2003, Amnesty International was a founding member of the Control Arms campaign which further exposed the impact of the irresponsible and illicit arms trade on human rights. Our sustained campaigning and advocacy were critical in raising global political awareness that the lack of international regulation of the arms trade meant that human rights violators had easy access to their tools of repression.

In 2006 Amnesty International and its partners convinced 153 governments in the UN General Assembly to vote in favour of establishing a global

consultation process on the Arms Trade Treaty. Another testimony to Amnesty International's influence is that the proposed wording of the "Golden Rule", which aims to safeguard human rights, is currently included in the draft Treaty.

Throughout this process, Amnesty International has deployed extensive research, targeted advocacy and global campaigning – from publishing specialist reports, engaging in dialogue with the UN, participating in international meetings with thematic and legal experts, to mobilizing hundreds of thousands of people around the world through one of the first ever online campaigns.

Now, at a crunch point in the UN process, Amnesty International will combine its unique mix of expertise, research, partnerships, networks, mobilization power and credibility to run strong, internationally co-ordinated advocacy that will mobilize public and political opinion to secure the best possible Arms Trade Treaty and its ratification.

OUR VISION FOR CHANGE

Amnesty International will combine popular campaigning – involving thousands of supporters, members and activists worldwide backing our key demands on governments – with more specialized advocacy to convince decision-makers and decision-takers. There will be campaigning and advocacy on both national and international levels, based on robust research and analysis. To do this successfully, Amnesty International will need to bring together:

1. Research, policy analysis and case studies to maintain pressure on key governments and demonstrate the need for, and value of, an Arms Trade Treaty with strong human rights safeguards at its core.
2. Publicity initiatives and media engagement to disseminate research, policy reports and campaign materials across multiple national and international channels in order to expose irresponsible arms transfers, raise awareness and change public and political opinions around the world.

In 2010, the six countries which produced the highest number of refugees – Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia and Sudan – were all suffering armed conflict

3. Advocacy and lobbying of political leaders and other influential actors, including inter-governmental bodies, key individual governments, arms companies and business associations.

4. Mass mobilization campaigns and co-ordinated actions with Amnesty International constituencies and NGO partners, targeting all key political leaders worldwide. These will include a global petition, high-profile Days of Activism and a Global Week of Action covering at least 120 countries, supported by dedicated online tools and audiovisual materials. These combined global actions will help to ensure that a critical mass of states vote for strong provisions in the Treaty and prevent blocker or sceptical states from watering them down.

5. Training and capacity-building for campaigners and activists in the form of policy and legal advice, briefings and specialist training. This will help us maintain policy expertise and develop strategies and tactics for the co-ordinated development of relevant, targeted, sensitive and timely advocacy and



campaigns in the run-up to July and the ongoing campaign for Treaty ratification.

Students brandish toy guns to demand that their government support an international Arms Trade Treaty. Manila, Philippines, March 2012.

During the 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone, largely fought using small arms, 64,000 women and girls were victims of sexual violence

WORKING TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE ARMS TRADE TREATY

By 2015, Amnesty International's actions will have led to the adoption and widespread ratification of a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty which means that:

Lives will be protected: fewer people will be killed, injured, tortured, violently repressed, displaced or suffer other gross human rights violations as effective controls on transfers of weapons and military, security and police equipment are agreed, restricting and stopping their flow to known human rights violators.

Communities will be empowered: the legal framework provided by the Treaty will enable community representatives in affected countries to report and challenge human rights abuses and to promote better controls on the transfer and use of conventional arms.

Governments will have adopted and ratified a strong Treaty, including a "Golden Rule" to prevent arms transfers from contributing to serious violations of

human rights and international humanitarian law, including unlawful killings, torture, arbitrary imprisonment and violent repression.

There will be more accountability: democratically elected assemblies, media and civil society in many countries will be more able and more likely to hold governments to account for exports, imports and international transfers of conventional arms, including those used to commit human rights violations.

Mobilization will be strengthened: Amnesty International campaigners, advocates and NGO partners will have improved knowledge and skills across a wide range of military, security and police issues. They will feel more confident to speak publicly, challenge officials, form tactical alliances and actively campaign to prevent traded arms being used to commit or facilitate human rights violations.





Around 2,000 people took part in a Control Arms event in São Paulo, Brazil, 2006.

HOW THE CAMPAIGN WILL UNFOLD IN 2012

ACTIVITIES

International advocacy (material production, travel, media engagement)	£127,000
Thematic research and case studies (experts fees, travel, material production)	£29,000
Campaign activities and outputs (publication design and printing, media engagement)	£71,000
“Tools of torture” project specifically researching the use of small arms in torture: advocacy and research (publication design and printing, experts fees, travel)	£22,000
Small arms proliferation and crisis response: country-specific research, analysis and case studies (experts fees and travel)	£24,500
Capacity building (experts fees, publication design and printing, travel)	£56,000

Sub-total

£329,500



Amnesty International Ireland members campaign for an Arms Trade Treaty, Galway, March 2012.

STAFF COSTS

Campaign Manager	£69,100
Campaign Researcher	£56,700
Campaign Organizer	£46,900
Campaign Co-ordinator	£51,250
Campaign Communication Officer	£42,500
Campaign Assistant	£31,700

Sub-total

£298,150

TOTAL

£627,650

Child soldiers have been actively involved in armed conflicts – either in government forces or in armed groups – in at least 14 countries since 2011

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We need your support now. After 20 years of campaigning, an international Arms Trade Treaty is finally within reach. Amnesty International needs £627,650 to help make it a reality.

In the run-up to the UN meeting in July this year, Amnesty International will widen and intensify its global campaign to vigorously expose the links between the irresponsible trading of arms and human rights abuses, and press for new laws and enforcement to deliver maximum human rights protection for hundreds of thousands of people across the globe.

To be credible and effective, Amnesty International's recommendations must be based on robust research and analysis, and present compelling arguments supported by concrete examples and case studies. This requires a dedicated

team of researchers as well as expert legal advisers.

Targeting multiple audiences – the general public, Amnesty International activists and supporters, influential people and technical experts at national and global levels – is key to the success of the campaign. We need to increase our campaigning capacity so that we can devise messages, materials and actions to successfully engage these different groups.

We need a visible and sustained presence at international meetings as well as one-to-one interaction with priority governments, supported by a range of materials designed by communication experts and translated into multiple languages to reach as many people as possible. Our media work will complement this, harnessing

the potential of digital media, and by working in partnership with other NGOs to organize events we will mobilize a greater support base for change.

We are coming to a decisive moment in the campaign for a global Arms Trade Treaty. Over the next two years and with your support, we have a unique opportunity to bring about a historic piece of legislation that could change the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world. We could finally have an international legal instrument to stop arms falling into the wrong hands and being used to commit atrocities and violate human rights worldwide.

Below: Control Arms event, India, September 2008.

Front cover: Seized arms cache in Ciudad Juarez, before being destroyed by the Mexican army. February 2012.

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ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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.

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