



## CONTROL ARMS TEACHER NOTES

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### WHY IS THE ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT) NEEDED?

The poorly-regulated global trade in conventional arms and ammunition fuels conflict, poverty and human rights abuses. For example, the UK government has given licences for arms and security exports to Algeria, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkey, Zambia and Zimbabwe – all countries where Amnesty International has serious human rights concerns.

The problems are made worse by the increasing globalisation of the arms trade, for example components being sourced from across the world, and production and assembly taking place in different countries, where there are sometimes lenient controls.

Domestic regulation of the arms trade has failed to adapt to these changes.

While existing national and regional controls are important, these are not enough to stop irresponsible transfers of arms and ammunition between countries (see [www.controlarms.org](http://www.controlarms.org)).

### WHAT ABOUT THE UK?

The UK is one of the top arms exporters in the world, so it has a responsibility to make sure that UK arms do not contribute to human rights violations abroad. The government has promised to put human rights at the heart of foreign policy, but there is still a lot of secrecy in the UK arms and security trade, and it is still not regulated properly.

### CURRENT STATE OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

In 2006, 153 governments voted overwhelmingly at the United Nations to develop an Arms Trade Treaty to control this deadly trade. In 2009 they pledged to complete negotiations for the Treaty by 2012. These negotiations are ongoing.

#### The Treaty should:

- cover all armaments, including ammunition and small arms
- regulate trade conducted indirectly through middlemen as well as direct deals between states
- provide guarantees that no government will permit the sale of arms if there is suspicion that they might fuel human rights abuses.

## WHAT SHOULD THE ARMS TRADE TREATY LOOK LIKE?

### THE TREATY MUST HOLD GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE

It must be based on states' existing legal obligations to international humanitarian law and the UN Charter.

- **Human rights and international humanitarian law**

Armed violence impinges on citizens' basic human rights to security, food, education, and medical care, among others. An Arms Trade Treaty must ensure no transfer is permitted when there is substantial risk the arms will be used to commit serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

- **United Nations Charter**

Illegal arms transfers violate UN Charter obligations to maintain and strengthen international peace and security, and to achieve international cooperation in problem-solving. An Arms Trade Treaty must ensure no transfer is permitted when there is a clear risk the arms will be used to violate the UN Charter.

### THE TREATY MUST BE ALL-INCLUSIVE

It must include all weapons, all transfers, and all transactions.

- **All weapons**

Armed violence is not only caused by weapons in the hands of unlawful groups. An Arms Trade Treaty must include all military, security, and police arms, related equipment and ammunition, and training.

- **All transfers and transactions**

Arms do not only enter borders via direct sales. An Arms Trade Treaty must control the import, export, and re-export of weapons, in addition to temporary transfer and trans-shipments, loans, gifts, and aid. It must also control those who provide training, transport, storage and finance.

### THE TREATY MUST BE WORKABLE AND ENFORCEABLE

It must provide guidelines for full, clear implementation.

- **Transparency and cooperation**

Arms regulations cannot be made or implemented behind closed doors. An Arms Trade Treaty must be transparent and must include a comprehensive plan for international cooperation and reporting.

- **Compliance and accountability**

Arms agreements must be enforceable. An Arms Trade Treaty must have a mechanism for monitoring compliance, and must include provisions for settling disputes and sanctions.

To find out more about the Arms Trade Treaty go to

[www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10079](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10079)

and [www.controlarms.org](http://www.controlarms.org)