

## **Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty**

### **Thematic Discussion on SALW and Stockpile Management**

**30 August 2021 - Geneva, Switzerland**

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Thank you, Ambassador.

Control Arms congratulates you both on your Presidency and your decision to focus this year's CSP on addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, with a specific focus on stockpile security. We see your paper and the recommendations included in it as a first practical step towards ensuring that the measures, policies and structures adopted to implement the ATT will be effective in tackling this important challenge.

We welcome your efforts to strengthen the ATT provisions aimed at addressing the illicit trade in SALW by building on existing international and regional instruments and processes, including the UN Programme of Action. It was also positive that in this year's outcome document of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States Parties to the PoA States resolved "[t]o ensure that international humanitarian law and international human rights law are taken into consideration in national small arms and light weapons transfer decisions."<sup>1</sup> Continuing efforts to bridge the silos between the work carried out under these frameworks can only serve to strengthen national and regional efforts to prevent the illicit trade and diversion of small arms.

In addition to the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, States Parties must also address key weaknesses in the legal arms trade systems. Arms transfers to fragile areas don't disappear once conflict abates. Following the collapse of the Ghadaffi regime, the weapons transferred to Libya were found in the possession of terrorist groups in all six of Libya's neighboring countries and at least four other countries across the Sahel.<sup>2</sup> Today in Afghanistan, arms supplied to national forces are at risk of being used by the Taliban to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law. The continued recycling of weapons in these regions and beyond serves to exacerbate rising tensions and results in increased political instability and an exponential increase in human suffering.

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<sup>1</sup> Operational paragraph 31, UN General Assembly (2021). "Outcome of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects". A/CONF.192/BMS/2021/CRP.2/Rev.1

[https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/salw/bms2021/documents/BMS7\\_finalreport.pdf](https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/salw/bms2021/documents/BMS7_finalreport.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ATT Monitor (2016). Tackling Terror: How The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Could Help Stop The Diversion Of Arms And Ammunition In West Africa" <https://attmonitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ATT-Monitor-Case-Study-3-Tackling-Terror-1.pdf>

Weapons are useless without the ammunition that fuels them. For this reason, we also wish to encourage States Parties to also consider ammunition in the context of its controls throughout the life cycle of an arms transfer. Diversion of ammunition fuels conflicts, facilitates terrorism and organized crime and contributes to the perpetration of gender-based violence on a daily basis. While the ATT already requires States Parties to include ammunition in national control systems and in export risk assessments, extending the recommendations highlighted in your paper to ammunition would further strengthen efforts to reduce human suffering.

Thank you.