



ICRC

Ninth Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty

21-25 August 2023

International Committee of the Red Cross

Statement on Treaty Universalization

Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) expresses its appreciation to you, Ambassador Yoon of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador Göbel of Germany for your work as Co-chairs of the Working Group on Treaty Universalization.

This year marks 10 years since the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty and we congratulate and thank all 113 member states for their work to reduce the human cost of uncontrolled arms transfers. We would also like to congratulate Gabon and Andorra for becoming the 112th and 113th States Parties to the ATT since the last CSP. However, there is still a long way to reach the universalization of the treaty. Over 40% of States across the globe are not yet party to the treaty. To this end, the ICRC and the broader Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement remain deeply committed to advancing the ATT's universalization.

The ICRC supports the view of the chairs stated in the Draft Proposal Enhancing the Work of the ATT Working Group on Treaty Universalization (WGTU) that the process of ratification or accession to the Treaty depends on each States' unique national circumstances. The ICRC therefore stands ready to support States by providing individual and tailor-made assistance based on their circumstances. We have been supporting States for the past ten years through compatibility studies, bilateral discussions with relevant ministries and bodies, and by preparing tools to facilitate and enhance dialogue both within and between States.

The ICRC lends its support to the suggestion in the co-chairs' draft proposal on the adoption of a multi-year format for treaty universalization. In our view, this would allow the WGTU to continue supporting national ratification or accession over an extended period, while at the same time ensuring that momentum is maintained towards the universalization of the ATT. The ICRC would like to add that to maintain long term engagement at the capital level, the involvement of the larger Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can play a crucial role in sustaining the dialogue and providing continued prominence to the treaty at the national level.

It is pertinent to note that some states have adopted pledges on ATT universalization and implementation at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The International Conference brings together the parties to the Geneva Convention and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The next International Conference will take place in 2024 and we look forward to working with member states and the Movement in the lead up, including on implementation of these voluntary pledges.

The ICRC continues to raise awareness of the treaty through various meetings and conference. One such example is the 2022 IHL Conference for Northeast and Southeast Asia and the Pacific which was held in Seoul on 2-4 November 2022. The conference was



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organized by the ICRC with the support and sponsorship of the Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It notably focused on the domestic implementation of weapons treaties including the ATT and related thematic issues. The Conference gathered more than 35 government officials working on IHL matters, mostly from MFA and MOD, representing 17 countries in the Asia Pacific Region. In September 2023, the ICRC -ECOWAS Annual Meeting on the Implementation of IHL is due to take place in Abuja and will discuss the ATT among other issues with ECOWAS states from West Africa. A parallel regional meeting of National Commissions of IHL and similar bodies will be organized next month in Buenos Aires for Latin American States and will have a dedicated session on ATT ratification and implementation

Finally, as we mark a decade since the adoption of the treaty, efforts should intensify to increase the rate of accession in the coming years. The ICRC urges all states that are not yet party to the ATT to accede to the Treaty at the earliest opportunity. In particular, we urge the twenty-eight Signatory states to complete the ratification process and bolster the ranks of existing States Parties. With a view to fostering progress towards universalization, we encourage States Parties to set themselves ambitious and time-bound objectives, and to commit to undertake concrete actions to achieve them.

We will continue to work tirelessly to support States Parties in their implementation of the ATT to the highest possible standard. The faithful implementation of the ATT is the most compelling testimony to its effectiveness and will go a long way in attracting other States to join.

Thank you.