

The Human Scope of an ATT

A project of the Ecumenical Campaign for a Strong and Effective Arms Trade Treaty



armstreatynow.org

An initiative of the World Council of Churches





PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Human Scope of an ATT is a project of the Ecumenical Campaign for a Strong and Effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The purpose of this project is to bring personal testimonies together that demonstrate the human consequences of the arms trade and the direct impact that conventional weapons have on the lives of people around the world. Read the following compelling narratives, and then join us online to:

1. Add your story and picture to our rapidly growing effort
2. Show your support for a *Strong and Effective Arms Trade Treaty* by engaging in one of the many other campaign activities

Learn more by visiting us online: www.armstreatynow.org or contact Campaign Manager, Daniel Pieper: dap@wcc-coe.org



“Now they have brand new guns. Where does one get new guns for 6,000 young men?”

THE HUMAN SCOPE OF AN ATT

**The Honourable Joy Kwaje,
Member of Parliament, long-time leader of church women
and former Commissioner for Human Rights
Juba, South Sudan**

Despite the joy of achieving independence in 2011, the people of South Sudan still have deep scars and traumas to heal after decades of armed conflict. We have a new 2,000-kilometer border in the north that is straddled by ethnic groups and nomadic herders, many of them still highly militarized. There are provocations made across that border, including evidence of support for armed groups in South Sudan.

Early in 2012, 6,000 young fighters from one ethnic group attacked another ethnic group in a dispute over cattle stealing. They killed about 600 people. The attackers were from an ethnic group that just went through a disarmament process two years ago. Now they have brand-new guns. Where does one get new guns for 6,000 young men?

Churches have made numerous interventions in such disputes but, if illegal weapons are fed into the situation, things can easily get out of hand. We have never had the experience of living in a state where people can actually learn how to be citizens. We are looking forward to the opportunity.

**Rev Dr Silvester Arinaitwe,
Executive Secretary of the Uganda Joint Christian Council
Kampala, Uganda**

Illegal weapons reach Uganda via armed groups operating in Sudan, northern Kenya and even Somalia. We lobby as churches for inter-governmental action to stop this illegal international trade, and at the same time we work to conscientize the public in communities at risk within Uganda. This involves teaching people about their rights, duties and responsibilities as citizens, including the ban on having an illegal weapon.

We work at the grassroots and we also take up related issues such as corruption and accountability at different levels of government. We advocate for the government to provide security in areas where ethnic groups who have given up their weapons still face armed threats from groups across our borders. Cooperation between governments in our region is important to control such weapons.

**Dr Irene Tchangou,
Gynecologist
Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo**

Our wish is to have a world without gender-based violence! Africa without gender-based violence! DR Congo without gender-based violence!

The hospital where I work treated 2,591 victims of sexual violence in 2011. Nearly half – 1,177 people – were cases of gender-based violence used as a weapon of war. Gender-based violence increases mortality and morbidity, diseases, family breakdowns and the collapse of social structures – the same effects as military weapons.

70 percent of these attacks were committed by men from armed groups operating in eastern DRC. Half the attacks took place in the victims' homes. More than half were multiple rapes.

Three-quarters of the survivors needed psychological care. The hospital has doctors, surgeons, psychologists, social workers and lawyers because people attacked in this way need medical, psycho-social and legal services.

In July 2011 men wearing soldiers' uniforms raped a 35-year-old mother in her home. She was shot in the back and left in a coma, bleeding. The attackers then found her 17-year-old daughter, who had been hiding. They threw her on top of the body of her mother and raped her too. Both women had serious internal injuries. They received treatment at our hospital and survived. But the family is shattered. The daughter is so traumatized by what happened she feels she cannot ever see or speak to her mother again. She is receiving therapy.

Getting professional care within 72 hours of an attack offers some protection against HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, infections and pregnancy. Treatment and healing, however, take a long, long time. Patients need confidentiality and a secure environment. Long-term recovery raises further challenges, including over-coming stigmas, finding a secure place to live, and social and economic reintegration in society. Also, care and trauma counselling are often needed by members of the victim's family.

Gender-based violence is a reality of war here in Central Africa and which Colombia, Bosnia, Liberia and Sri Lanka have suffered too.

Remember our wish: To be free of gender-based violence!



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“International action is needed to stop the supply of weapons so we can get out of this vicious cycle and get on with developing our country.”

Mr Cleophas Basaluci,
Country Director for Swiss Inter-Church Aid
Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo

We work with local communities that need humanitarian aid and development assistance. Men who use guns to make money take a heavy toll on these communities. Their weapons come from the illicit trade in guns. They rob people, extort money and rape women. Some of their victims are killed, many are injured and traumatized.

The guns come to our province in two ways. Some are brought in by armed groups, including militia that were involved in the Rwanda genocide. Others are military weapons sold to local civilians by poorly paid soldiers, including guns from the army of President Mobutu in the 1990s. The weapons stay in circulation for a long time.

The guns are used in many ways. Communities will cultivate their fields and then, when the crops are ripe, armed men come and take the produce. Things a woman does just to provide for her family – walking to market, working the family's garden, getting firewood – make her more vulnerable to attack. Armed poachers take elephants, gorillas and hippopotamus from our national park.

Sometimes we cannot reach the communities we are helping because of road blocks and the risks of travelling if armed groups are in the area. In such a context, no investment is worthwhile because it will probably be stolen or destroyed later. International action is needed to stop the supply of weapons so we can get out of this vicious cycle and get on with developing our country.

Ms Eburn James,
General Secretary of the Sierra Leone Council of Churches,
Freetown, Sierra Leone



“There were so many guns around it affected you even if you wanted nothing to do with it.”

During Sierra Leone's civil war the boys carrying guns were so young the gun barrels would drag on the ground when they walked. There were guns coming into our country via Libya, Burkina Faso and Liberia. There were so many guns around it affected you even if you wanted nothing to do with it.

Once when my husband had to go away he gave me a pistol for protection. I did not want it so I hid it in the attic. Later I took it into the bush and threw it away. The only way to deal with illegal weapons is to get rid of them and to stop new guns coming in. It's like trying to stop smoking – you cannot keep getting cigarettes if you are trying to quit.

We had no choice but to survive all this violence, so we healed ourselves by our struggle for survival. The people affected by violence helped each other and community support was strong.

Today, thank God, there are fewer illegal guns and less violence. There are 26 churches in this council and we want stronger international laws to keep so many guns from ever coming into our country again.

TELL US ABOUT IT!

Tell us your story! How has the use of arms impacted your community? Why is an ATT important to our world? Send us your testimony and a picture, and together we will demonstrate the human impact of the irresponsible arms trade.

Visit us online: www.armstreatynow.org

Email: Daniel Pieper, Campaign Manager: dap@wcc-coe.org

WHAT IS THE ARMS TRADE TREATY?

Every day, somewhere in the world, 2,000 people die as a result of armed violence. The uncontrolled and irresponsible sale of, and trade in, small arms and light weapons fuels poverty and suffering. Additionally, the massive and ready supply of weapons makes them accessible for misuse and abuse.

The lack of commonly agreed on international standards for the transfer of weapons across international borders contributes to armed conflict, the displacement of people, organized crime and terrorism, thus undermining peace, stability and socio-economic development. Recognising that fact, the General Assembly of the United Nations began the process to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty in January 2010 culminating in a treaty conference in July 2012. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) seeks consensus on a legally binding treaty containing universal regulations enforcing the highest possible standards for the responsible trade of conventional weapons. The idea is that if all UN Member States agree on a set of standards as to what makes arms transfers acceptable, it will make the illicit trade or transfer of arms much more difficult.

The ATT will not curtail national laws regarding the internal movement of arms, the right for citizens to bear arms or a country's right to self-defence. However, the application of internationally agreed trading standards can prevent and reduce the use of weapons for purposes of human rights abuses, violations of humanitarian law, or to incite terror. We all have to do our part to ensure that the ATT is strong (broad human scope- including provision for human rights, humanitarian law, protections for gender-based violence and survivors assistance and includes small arms, light weapons, ammunition and parts) and effective (contains provisions for accountability and enforceability) in order to protect and save lives!

WHAT IS THE 'ECUMENICAL CAMPAIGN FOR A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE ATT'?

At the grassroots and national levels, in their communities and countries, churches and specialised ministries are witnesses to the human impact of unlawful armed violence. We see the suffering and chaos of violence fuelled by the irresponsible trade in arms. Members of the international ecumenical community are well-positioned to take action together. In many countries, civil society is mobilising to support a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Churches were among the first members of civil society to call for universal regulations on the trade of weapons. Therefore, churches working together can continue to do their part to strengthen the proposed treaty through the negotiation process. At a minimum, the ATT must protect communities and saves lives that are put at risk from the poorly regulated worldwide trade in arms and ammunition.

As a first step, our efforts will build towards July 2012, which is a crucial month for our work on the treaty. In July, the UN will hold the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations at the UN Headquarters in New York. This will not be an easy process for the Member State representatives present, but it is our mission is to ensure that ATT negotiations are not confined to discussion of the sale of a simple commodity. Rather states must acknowledge, and address, the human cost, community suffering and deaths caused by the irresponsible trade of weapons. While technical trade policy details can be made available to interested members of the Ecumenical ATT Campaign, our collective goal in this process is to build a popular mobilisation campaign that encourages us to:

1. Educate ourselves on the need for an ATT
2. Mobilise others to act in support of a strong and effective ATT that contains faith values of justice, peace and human wellbeing
3. Lobby our elected officials and governmental representatives as to the human imperative for an ATT, and for governments to support, ratify and implement a strong and effective treaty



**"Yes, I support
a strong and
effective Arms
Trade Treaty that
will protect and
save lives!"**



Our campaign will unite under the rally call:

"Yes, I support a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty that will protect and save lives!"

Approximately 60 representatives of churches, related agencies and faith networks in 30 countries have signed up to take leading positions in our campaign. This exciting mobilisation of individuals, churches and organizations is highlighting the important role local religious communities can play bringing the human condition to the negotiations for a strong and effective ATT and beyond.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE ECUMENICAL ATT CAMPAIGN:

The Arms Trade Treaty will only be as effective as its contents and language prescribes. Through the diplomatic efforts that have been displayed in the ATT process so far, we have seen numerous interests and forces pulling in many different directions. In our campaign and lobby efforts it is therefore important to highlight the areas that to the greatest extent protect and save human lives and human dignity. The ATT must contain unequivocal criteria for arms transfers, so that there will be very little room for varying interpretations from signatory states.

Inclusion of Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law in the ATT:

Every year, because of the widespread availability of and misuse of weapons, hundreds of thousands of civilians are displaced, injured, raped, or killed. In many parts of the world, weapons are so easy to obtain and armed violence so prevalent that after conflict, civilians face many of the same threats that they did during it. An International Committee of the Red Cross study, commissioned by states in 1995 and published in 1999, concluded that the widespread availability of arms facilitates violations of international humanitarian law and has damaging consequences for civilians during armed conflicts. As long as weapons are too easily available, serious violations of international humanitarian law will be made more likely and the provisions of humanitarian assistance endangered.

All existing human rights agreements, including the UN Charter, should be honoured and named in the Arms Trade Treaty, as they further substantiate both the need for, and the legitimacy of, a strong and effective global arms regulatory system.

The ATT should therefore, reflect all States' obligation to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights by making them fundamental criteria on which arms transfer decisions are made, so that the weapons do not end up in the hands of those who may be expected to use them in serious violations of already agreed upon norms and standards.

Inclusion of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), ammunition and parts in the scope of the ATT:

The Arms Trade Treaty should include all conventional weapons. The inclusion of small arms and light weapons is essential for a treaty that meets the needs of those most affected by armed conflict. This is not a question of measuring different weapons against each other to see which is more 'dangerous.' No, this is about the volume of international transfers – more SALW are moved across international borders than any other type or class of weapon. For this reason alone, such weapons should be included in a treaty that addresses the trade of arms. However, availability is not the only variable concerning why small arms and light weapons and ammunition **MUST** be included in the ATT. A man from West Africa noted, "From Mozambique to Montenegro, from Columbia to Kenya, small arms and light weapons have indeed become weapons of mass destruction." Small arms and ammunition are used not only as tools of war; they are used for security, crime,

coercion, protection, to incite fear and maintain peace and order. The reality is simple, **regulating the trade of small arms and ammunition ensures that they are used as tools for the common good and justice, and NOT as weapons for terror and misuse.**

Inclusion of strong and effective language on the negative impact of illicit weapons on sustainable socioeconomic development:

The devastating impact of conflict, armed crime, and all forms of armed violence around the world is clear and present for all to see. Armed violence closes schools, churches, fractures communities, overwhelms health care systems, and discourages investment and economic productivity – altogether making lives and livelihoods insecure. The physical and immediate threat of danger from the use of arms displaces people, causes injury and even death, while state and non-state spending on arms or arms races can divert vital funds from public services such as education and health care. When spending on weapons takes place without accountability and transparency, it can aggravate corruption and facilitate human rights abuses. According to the World Bank's World Development Report, **there is not a single country experiencing armed conflict that will achieve a single Millennium Development Goal.**

This is why more effective and responsible regulations of the international arms trade are urgently needed, and **MUST** be reflected in the Arms Trade Treaty!

Inclusion of strong and effective language on the impact arms have on gender-based violence:

There are different ways that language on women, peace, and security should be included in the ATT. For example, it is crucial to recognise that the irresponsible transfer of weapons continue to kill or maim civilians, a majority of whom are women and children, both during and long after conflicts have ended. One of the principle ways women are disproportionately affected by the use of weapons is coercive sexual violence and rape. UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1960 explicitly address sexual violence as a tool of war. In his report on 1820/1888 in December 2010, the UN Secretary-General stressed, "Sexual violence as a tool of war can become a way of life: once entrenched in the fabric of civilian society, it lingers long after the guns have fallen silent." The irresponsible trade of arms across borders clearly has a lasting impact on the lives of women children and families, **the ATT has the opportunity and responsibility to name this reality and build mechanisms within the trade policy to address the needs of women directly.**

Inclusion of measures for survivor assistance:

The need to provide assistance to victims of irresponsible and illegal arms transfers is an integral element to a successful Arms Trade Treaty. Manufacturers, companies, brokers, and governments that deal in arms should be held accountable for conducting their weapons trade responsibly, and for the misuse of illicit weapons when they do not. This includes meticulous documentation in order to trace weapons and ammunition and the purpose of sales and transfers. Additionally, the special needs of vulnerable groups must be taken into account. Victim and survivor assistance does not have to be a system of reparations or direct payments; **however, provisions for access to medical care, rehabilitation, and psychological support, as well as other social and economic programming will help them and hasten the process of post-conflict reconstruction and peace building.**

Pre-existing UN human rights treaties:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The Convention on the Rights of a Child
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- The International Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities
- The International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances
- International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism





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