

Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

June 23, 2009

Re: Arms Trade Treaty

Dear Secretary Clinton:

While weapons of mass destruction remain a major concern, the threats posed by the largely unregulated global trade in *conventional weapons* is among the most deadly problems currently confronting states and civilians worldwide. **We encourage you to help address this problem by advocating for an effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) during the upcoming July Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) meeting at the UN.**

Over the past two decades, the largely unregulated trade in conventional weapons has fueled violent conflicts, facilitated grave violations of human rights, and undermined efforts towards sustainable development around the world. When properly regulated, the global conventional arms trade provides weapons to states for legitimate national self-defense, peacekeeping, and law enforcement activities. However, too often deadly weapons and technologies are transferred to governments and armed groups with track records of using them against civilians and violating international law.

The United States has arguably the most comprehensive arms export laws in the world. Yet, when faced with an arms industry that operates globally, governments cannot rely solely on traditional national or regional export control systems. While almost all arms-exporting states have at least some guidelines intended to control international arms transfers, many countries do not have critical national laws and systems of control. These loopholes significantly curtail bilateral and multilateral efforts to impede weapons shipments to fighting forces bent on seriously violating human rights. In order to help close these loopholes and ensure that controls imposed by one state or region are not undermined by lax controls of another, national and regional initiatives need to be complemented by the development of global standards in the form of a legally binding treaty.

Many of the key arms exporters and recipients of U.S. exports agree that a strong Arms Trade Treaty based on international human rights and humanitarian law is in their interest. The core group of states championing the Arms Trade Treaty at the United Nations are from all continents. These states include Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom. While the treaty is already supported by over 140 governments, U.S. participation would enhance the prospect of success. As the world's largest arms exporter and the state with what is generally recognized as the gold-standard of

export control systems, the U.S. presence at the negotiating table would lend significant credibility and effectiveness to this crucial endeavor.

While a single treaty is no panacea, no other current initiative offers as much promise to impose some order on the unregulated global arms trade. As such, we urge you to be an advocate of a strong Arms Trade Treaty at the United Nations during the July UN Open Ended Working Group meetings and beyond. We also look forward to your future collaboration with U.S. based non-governmental organizations as you continue to engage in this critical effort to curb a trade that has fueled so many devastating effects around the world.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Amnesty International USA

Albert Schweitzer Institute

Arms Control Association

Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict

Center for International Policy

Citizens for Global Solutions

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Oxfam America

Cc: Ellen O. Tauscher, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security-Designate
Robert J. Einhorn, Special Advisor for Nonproliferation and Arms Control,
Ann K. Ganzer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Threat Reduction
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