



## Reaching Critical Will

a project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

[www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)



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### WILPF Toolkit for the Arms Trade Treaty

On 2–27 July 2012, all UN member states will gather in New York for the negotiation of the [Arms Trade Treaty \(ATT\)](#). Reaching Critical Will, WILPF's disarmament project, will be monitoring the negotiation conference. As with the four preparatory committees leading up to these negotiations, RCW will be posting statements and documents [online](#) and will coordinate, edit, and contribute a daily newsletter, the [ATT Monitor](#), and an [online blog](#) together with activists from Global Action to Prevent War, the Control Arms Campaign, and others.

Civil society has been pushing for an international treaty to control the arms trade for decades. There are currently no legally-binding international standards for the export, import, or brokering of conventional weapons. The process to negotiate an ATT, which began at the United Nations in 2006, will be an excellent opportunity to demand that arms transfers are not conducted when they will be used to violate international humanitarian law or human rights, or undermine socioeconomic development or the environment.

WILPF believes that an ATT should not merely be used as a procedural authorization of arms transfers. It should be a strong tool with the primary purpose of preventing armed conflict, preventing the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, and seriously reducing the culture and economy of militarism. A strong ATT can help build the foundations for not just the regulation but also the *reduction* of the arms trade, along with the reduction of militarism throughout politics and society, reduction of military spending, and redirection of economic resources.

This toolkit is for all WILPF Sections and Branches. It includes background information on the arms trade treaty, WILPF's official position on the ATT, talking points to be considered when meeting with your national representatives, and materials and resources from NGOs working on achieving a "bulletproof" arms trade treaty.

Please use this toolkit and share it with others. Feedback is welcome. Please let us know if you use this toolkit or if you meet with government representatives or with other civil society groups to discuss ATT issues. We want to hear from you about your actions!

In peace,

Ray Acheson

Project Director, Reaching Critical Will

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

## **Background information on the ATT**

Since the early 1990s, an active civil society campaign has been promoting the negotiation of a robust, comprehensive, legally-binding treaty to establish standards and restrictions on the international trade in conventional arms. Reaching Critical Will has prepared some background on the history of the UN process and elements of the proposed treaty.

- [Brief history of the UN process](#)
- [Elements of the treaty](#)

## **WILPF papers and articles on the ATT**

- [WILPF position on an international arms trade treaty](#)
- [Beyond an ATT](#), Ray Acheson of Reaching Critical Will/WILPF, February 2011
- [The ATT, women, and gender](#), Emma Rosengren, WILPF Sweden, February 2011

## **Talking points for meetings with government representatives or for op-eds**

All WILPF members are encouraged to meet with their government officials to discuss the upcoming ATT negotiations. Lobbying at the local and national levels is absolutely vital to successful negotiations at the international level. By coordinating with WILPF members around the world meeting with their governments to discuss the ATT, Reaching Critical Will will be in a much stronger position to engage with governments at the UN.

Based on the materials above, provided by WILPF and the Control Arms Campaign, here is a sample of key talking points to be addressed in your meetings with government officials:

- WILPF supports the latest consolidated draft of the Chair's paper. It should be used as the basis for negotiations. While the paper is not perfect, it provides a solid foundation from which we can move forward.
- Strong criteria on international humanitarian law, human rights, sustainable development, and gender equality must be at the heart of the ATT.
- Small arms and light weapons and ammunition must be included in the treaty, along with the other categories of conventional weapons.
- Police and internal security equipment should also be included in the treaty. Excluding such items would have serious implications for human rights abuses, such as those witnessed during the Arab Spring.
- The ATT's criteria must not be restricted only to exports of conventional weapons. The criteria must also apply to imports, transit and transshipment, and brokering.
- The treaty should elaborate specifications for national reports on all arms transfers and should require states to publicly declare this information.

- The ATT should include a gender perspective in its criteria for arms transfers, including by restricting states parties from authorizing an arms transfer where there is a substantial risk that the export under assessment may be used in acts of gender based violence as prohibited and defined in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- Members of civil society accredited to the ATT process should be allowed as observers throughout all meetings of the negotiating conference, including informal meetings.

If you want more ideas for talking points or for writing an op-ed to your local newspapers, a comprehensive set of requests can be found in WILPF's position paper.

## Materials and resources

[Reaching Critical Will's web pages on the arms trade treaty](#) have lots of background information, papers, primary documents, and more.

[The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs has an official ATT website](#) with lots of documentation and information about the UN process to negotiate a treaty.

[The Control Arms Campaign](#) has information on past and present campaigns to achieve an ATT. It is also running a campaign called [Speak Out: Control Arms Now!](#) Please consider lending your voice to this campaign!

The following are some practical guides prepared by various NGOs:

- [Our Right to Know: Transparent Reporting Under an Arms Trade Treaty](#) (Amnesty International, June 2011)
- [Small, but lethal: small arms ammunition and the arms trade treaty](#) (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2011)
- [National Implementation of the Proposed Arms Trade Treaty](#) (Oxfam International, Saferworld, University of Georgia, 2010)
- [Applying Sustainable Development to Arms Transfer Decisions](#) (Oxfam International, April 2009)
- [Applying Human Rights Standards to Arms Transfer Decisions](#) (Amnesty International, 2008)
- [Applying International Humanitarian Law Criteria](#) (International Committee of the Red Cross, May 2007)

The following are position papers developed by the Control Arms Campaign:

- [Implementation](#) (June 2011)
- [Global Principles](#) (July 2009)
- [Scope: Type of Transfers](#) (July 2009)
- [Scope: Type of Weapons](#) (July 2009)