



**74th United Nations General Assembly
First Committee on Disarmament and International Security**

Statement on the International Arms Trade
Delivered by Montserrat Martinez, 24-0 Mexico on behalf of the Control Arms Coalition

On 24 December 2019, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will celebrate its fifth anniversary since entry-into-force. As of today, the Treaty has 105 States Parties, many of which have been persuaded to join as a result of direct NGO outreach and engagement. In addition, many of these governments have taken concrete steps towards implementing its provisions.

Yet in these five years over 3 million¹ people have died as a result of armed violence and conflict, and many millions more suffered injury, displacement, famine, torture and abuse.

In Yemen alone, approximately 100,000 civilians have died as a consequence of the war over the past four-and-half years. A conflict notable for airstrike attacks on civilians and a lengthy blockade, Yemen is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with more than 24 million people – some 80 per cent of the population – in need of humanitarian assistance, including more than 12 million children².

Unfortunately, Yemen is just one tragic example of arms transfers directly fueling human suffering. There are countless other examples around the world: from South Sudan to Honduras to Palestine to Papua New Guinea where arms fuel conflict and armed violence, and facilitate terrorism and organized crime.

In this very moment, 420 million children³ worldwide are living in conflict zones, where they face a constant danger of being killed or maimed, where they experience famine and disease, where their education is placed on hold because it is too dangerous to go to school.

Our work is, therefore, far from over, if we hope to fulfil the Treaty's promise of reducing human suffering and transforming the global arms trade for the better. That is why on behalf of Control Arms, I call on all States to:

1. Adopt the highest possible standards and establish rigorous structures to regulate the global arms trade to ensure that the Treaty can make a huge difference in the lives of millions of people, particularly from vulnerable groups, around the world.
2. Support transparency to help ensure accountability in arms-transfer decisions, prevent diversion of arms and ammunition, and boost confidence-building and mutual security

¹ <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/T-Briefing-Papers/SAS-BP-Violent-Deaths-Scenarios.pdf>

² <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>

³ <https://www.stopwaronchildren.org/report.pdf>



among States Parties. This year, so far, only 64 percent of ATT States Parties have submitted reports on their national arms exports and imports, leaving too much of the arms trade in the shadows.

3. Develop robust risk assessment processes that provide specific training and resources related to gender-based violence and the Treaty. Control Arms welcomes the attention paid to the discussion of GBV in the risk assessment under the Presidency of Ambassador Karklins of Latvia and encourages states to continue this important work.

There are so many steps, small and large, that should be taken to make the world better and safer, but crucial among them is bringing an immediate halt to arms transfers that fuel conflict, poverty, and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The vast majority of you in this room are diplomats and officials, here to represent your countries. The rest of us are advocates, representatives of international organizations or industry groups. But all of us are, at the end of the day, part of a global community committed to securing a more peaceful and secure world. The ATT offers the blueprint to transform the arms trade and safeguard people from conflict and armed violence. Control Arms stands ready to work with all states to effectively implement the ATT in order to reduce human suffering.