

Oxfam Education

www.oxfam.org.uk/education

The Arms Trade Treaty is passed by the United Nations

Introduction

It has taken ten long years. History was finally made on April 2 2013 when the United Nations put the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to the vote. 156 countries approved the treaty, 21 abstained and 3 voted against the treaty. This vote followed extensive negotiations during the final ATT conference in New York.



Jo Adamson, the UK's Ambassador to the UN, tells campaigners that the UK was voting Yes for the Arms Trade Treaty. Photo: Control Arms

Update

With the ATT vote governments around the world have committed themselves to assessing the risks of transferring weapons to other countries. In this context 'risk' refers to the potential for weapons to worsen conflict or lead to serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

The next step is for the countries that voted for the treaty to formally begin ratifying it. This process begins on June 3 2013. At this stage each signatory country will ratify the treaty in their parliament. The Arms Trade Treaty will come into legal force 90 days after the 50th country ratifies it.

However some loopholes in the treaty still need to be tightened up. Campaigners are calling for ammunition and spare parts to be fully included in the treaty. This point is important as the availability of ammunition has the potential to fuel conflicts around the world as much as the weapons themselves.

However the importance of the treaty cannot be underestimated. For the first time there is a legal framework for regulating the flow of weapons around the world. Much of the success for passing the

treaty has been due to a number of supportive governments and millions of ordinary people from around the world who relentlessly held their decision makers to account.



The Control Arms helicopter stunt in New York. The ammunition in the foreground wasn't included in the final treaty text. Photo: Control Arms

Education and Youth Thank You

We would like to say a big thank you to the young people and schools that campaigned on behalf of this of this historic treaty. When the Control Arms coalition began its campaign over ten years ago many people doubted that the public could take on the global arms trade and win. You have demonstrated that this is possible, and young people have remained at the heart of the campaign since it was launched.

For current updates on the progress of the Arms Trade Treaty, please check here and here and Twitter feed is here. These resources will Keep you up to date with the Arms Trade Treaty as it is ratified internationally, and find out more about the impact of the Treaty in making the lives of poor people safer and more secure.



Young campaigners hand in a giant petition to Peter Liley MP. Photo: John McLaverty/Oxfam