
Arms Trade Treaty
Tenth Conference of States Parties
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JOINT WORKING PAPER

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) UNDER THE ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT)

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1. When the Arms Trade Treaty entered into force in 2014, it was the first international treaty that explicitly recognized the link between the international arms trade, gender-based violence and violence against women and children (VAWC).¹ The Tenth Conference of States Parties therefore provides us with a welcome opportunity to reflect on our progress over the last decade in addressing this link through the implementation of articles 6, and 7.4.

2. In addition, it has now been five years since the thematic discussions on gender and gender-based violence at CSP5, which was held under Latvia's Presidency in 2019. At this meeting, States Parties decided to work towards achieving greater gender balance at ATT-related meetings, increasing their understanding of the gendered impact of armed violence in the context of the ATT, and discussing national practices on applying GBV risk assessment criteria in the Working Group on Effective Treaty Implementation.²

3. There is still much work to do to ensure the effective implementation of Article 7.4 of the ATT, as well as the decisions and recommendations of CSP5.

4. In 2021, 24% of women and girls who were victims of lethal violence around the world were killed by a firearm.³ Women and men, however, do not face the same kinds of threat: although men face a far greater risk of dying from firearms overall, including in conflict, women are often more likely to die from firearm use in their homes.⁴ We also know that non-lethal gender-based violence may often be facilitated by arms. For example, 70-90% of incidents of conflict-related sexual violence (CSRV) are reported to involve weapons.⁵ Furthermore, understanding GBV and its impact requires an intersectional perspective: an individual's risk of being targeted for GBV, as well as their ability to report it and access services afterwards, can be affected by other forms of discrimination in addition to gender. These include discrimination based on a person's race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status. While ATT States

Parties are seeking to mitigate these risks, their efforts are hampered by data challenges.⁶ Data on the use of weapons to facilitate GBV is often lacking⁷, and national homicide data disaggregated by sex and whether an arm is used is, on average, more than six years old.⁸

5. When it comes to the work of the ATT itself, work on gender equality is ongoing. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Ms Seong-mee Yoon became the first woman to preside a Conference of States Parties in 2023.⁹ However, only 38% of State delegates at CSP9 were women¹⁰, as were 42% of the 81 participants sponsored by the ATT Secretariat¹¹. These challenges also extend to the implementation of the ATT: only 11% of those participating in weapons and ammunition management training between 2015 and 2021 were women.¹² Furthermore, although there have been several substantive discussions on GBV within the Working Group on Treaty Implementation, many States Parties recognise the need to continue sharing good practices on the implementation of article 7.4.¹³

6. While we commend the active engagement of States Parties in recent years on furthering the implementation of the gender-related provisions of the ATT, and the decisions and recommendations from CSP5, we recognise the need to redouble our efforts in the years to come.

7. On that basis, we call on States Parties to consider the following recommendations moving forward, which could include:

1. Panama's proposals to appoint gender focal points to each of the ATT working groups;¹⁴ and to explore options to include gender-related aspects in ATT annual reports¹⁵;
2. Argentina's proposal to use the ATT as a forum to exchange good national practices in preventing arms-related gender-based violence.¹⁶ In line with this year's presidency's theme, this could include examples of effective interagency cooperation between, for example national institutions working on arms control, gender equality and public health;
3. Mexico's proposal for the ATT Secretariat to collect gender-disaggregated attendance data during ATT Working Group and Preparatory meetings, in addition to the data collected at CSPs, to foster gender balance in delegations. Gender balanced panels should also be encouraged in plenary sessions, side events and other forums, and gender balance should be considered in applications to the sponsorship programme;¹⁷
4. Encouraging future CSP presidencies to review progress made and challenges encountered in implementing gender-related decisions made at CSP5 and subsequent meetings;
5. Ensuring that efforts related to responsible business conduct in the arms sector, in line with approaches such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as outlined by Austria, Ireland and Mexico¹⁸, address concerns related to the implementation of article 7.4;
6. Exchanging good practices on, and providing support to, efforts to further disaggregate data on armed violence by, where feasible, age, disability, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, in addition to sex or gender;
7. Ensuring that arms export risk assessments take into account the risk of the conventional arms covered under Article 2(1) or of the items covered under Articles 3 or 4 being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of GBV or VAWC. In practice, this means that States Parties conducting risk assessment processes for the export and import of weapons could take into account the normative factors around GBV in the recipient countries that could relate to the items in question;

8. Establishing an information hub on the ATT Secretariat's website featuring resources from States, international and regional organisations, and civil society on the link between arms transfers and gender-based violence;
9. Encouraging eligible states to make greater use of the ATT's Voluntary Trust Fund to implement efforts to mitigate the risk of arms-related GBV and VAWC, in line with evidence-based good practices;
10. Integrating proposals made in the gender joint statement at CSP9 for States Parties to mainstream article 7.4 commitments into their Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plans, and to proactively address barriers to women's full, meaningful, equal and effective participation in ATT meetings and implementation efforts, including through effective interagency cooperation.

8. In conclusion, we thank UNIDIR, Reaching Critical Will, Small Arms Survey, Control Arms, the ATT Secretariat, and a number of States Parties for their continued support in providing data, conducting studies, and leading conversations on gender mainstreaming and preventing gender-based violence via the ATT. We remain convinced that together, we can build on our past efforts to promote gender equality and mitigate the risk of illicit arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of GBV or VAWC, with a view to contributing to peace, security and stability for all.

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- ¹ WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom). 2013. [Promoting Gender Equality in the Implementation of the UN Arms Trade Treaty](#). Geneva: WILPF.
- ² Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat. 2019. [Final Report of the Fifth Conference of States Parties](#). 23 August.
- ³ Small Arms Survey. 2023. [Global Violent Deaths in 2021](#). Geneva: Small Arms Survey.
- ⁴ Small Arms Survey. 2024. [How are sex, firearms, and homicidal violence linked?](#) Geneva: Small Arms Survey; Patel et al. 2022. 'Firearm injury – a preventable public health issue', *Lancet Public Health*, vol. 7 (no.11).
- ⁵ Salama, Hana. 2023. [Addressing Weapons in Conflict-related Sexual Violence: The Arms Control and Disarmament Toolbox](#). Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, p.6.
- ⁶ Loose, Hine-Wai and Carina Solmirano. 2024. [Monitoring Progress on the Implementation of Gender and Gender-based Violence Considerations Adopted by the Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty](#). Geneva: Control Arms, p. 6-7.
- ⁷ Salama, Hana. 2023, p.6. 8 Small Arms Survey. 2024.
- ⁸ Small Arms Survey. 2024.
- ⁹ Loose, Hine-Wai and Carina Solmirano. 2024, p. 6.
- ¹⁰ Nijs, Tom. 2024. [Arms Trade Treaty: Status of Gender Participation](#). Geneva: ATT Secretariat.
- ¹¹ Loose, Hine-Wai and Carina Solmirano. 2024, p. 6.
- ¹² UNIDIR and Control Arms. 2022. [Gender & the Arms Trade Treaty](#). Geneva: Control Arms and UNIDIR.
- ¹³ Loose, Hine-Wai and Carina Solmirano. 2024, p. 11.
- ¹⁴ Panama. 2024. Décima Conferencia de los Estados Partes (CSP10) en el Tratado sobre el Comercio de Armas (ATT) Reunión Preparatoria Informal de la CSP10, [Punto de la Agenda 2a - Grupo de Trabajo sobre la Aplicación Eficaz del Tratado \(WGETI\)](#). 16-17 May.
- ¹⁵ Panama. 2024. [Décima Conferencia de los Estados Partes \(CSP10\) en el Tratado sobre el Comercio de Armas \(ATT\) Reunión Preparatoria Informal de la CSP10, Punto de la Agenda 2b - Grupo de Trabajo sobre Transparencia y Presentación de Informes \(WGTR\)](#). 16-17 May.
- ¹⁶ Argentina. 2023. [Working Paper of the Argentine Delegation to be Presented at the Ninth Conference of the States Parties of the ATT](#).
- ¹⁷ Mexico. 2024. [Informe del Secretariado sobre el estado de la participación de las mujeres en las reuniones del ATT, Reunión informal preparatoria de la Décima Conferencia de los Estados Parte del Tratado sobre el Comercio de Armas \(ATT\)](#). 17 May.
- ¹⁸ Austria, Ireland and Mexico. 2023. [Joint Working Paper: Responsible Business Conduct and the Arms Trade Treaty](#).