



Statement on the risk of conventional arms being used for gender based violence or violence against women and children

Wednesday 21 February 2024

To be delivered by Carina Solmirano

Thank you Madame Facilitator,

Control Arms welcomes the discussions on the risk of conventional arms being used for gender-based violence or violence against women and children in this new sub-Working Group. As we approach the significant milestone of the Arms Trade Treaty's (ATT) tenth anniversary, it is timely that we reflect on the progress made and the challenges faced by States Parties in implementing Article 7.4 of the Treaty.

We welcome Argentina's initiative in launching the questionnaire and commend its efforts towards developing a Guide to Good Practices on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Control Arms looks forward to continuing to support Argentina in this crucial endeavor. In a regional workshop held this month on gender based violence (GBV) and the ATT, which was co-hosted by Control Arms and the Government of Mexico, with the support of UNSCAR, we encouraged delegations from Latin American countries to participate and respond to Argentina's questionnaire. Such collaborative efforts are essential to fostering inclusive discussions and advancing initiatives that contribute to addressing GBV within the framework of the ATT.

We also welcome the paper that was submitted by Mexico, Spain and the Small Arms Survey to last year's CSP9. In this connection, we support the call by Small Arms Survey that more work is needed to mitigate the risk of armed violence against people on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (or SOGIESC), specially in terms of data collection related to the use of arms to commit violence against the LGBTQI+ community. We welcome that these elements are included in Argentina's questionnaire.

In the past year, as part of Control Arms' Gender Action Plan Project, which was supported by the Government of Canada, Control Arms conducted a comprehensive survey to assess the advancements and obstacles encountered by both ATT States Parties and Signatory States in fulfilling the commitments established at CSP5. On GBV, our survey posed critical questions to States, to understand if and how they implement the GBV criteria in their risk assessments.

The responses received have shed light on a crucial insight: GBV alone has not been cited as the sole reason for denial in any instance. Instead, GBV appears to be intricately linked to the broader risk assessment criteria outlined in Article 7.1. Recognizing the need for further dialogue, Control Arms believes that more discussions and research on how States Parties could realize the full potential of Article 7.4 are needed.

On a related note, there has been limited discussion on how the ATT can help prevent violence against children in this fora. In 2022, the global figure of children killed or maimed was 8,630¹ and in light of today's major conflicts, that figure will have now increased sharply. It is incumbent on all of us to work to protect those who are most vulnerable in conflicts.

We take this opportunity to direct your attention to Control Arms' "How to use the Arms Trade Treaty to address violence against children: A Practical Guide for Risk Assessment," which was made possible again with the support of the Canadian Government and launched at the end of 2023. This guide provides criteria, indicators, and credible information sources that can be integrated into export risk assessments for violence against children.

We encourage all ATT stakeholders to initiate discussions on how armed violence, criminality, and irresponsible arms transfers affect the rights of children. We hope our practical guide can serve as a valuable starting point for these discussions.

Thank you for your attention.

¹ See -

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/11/end-killing-children-armed-conflict-un-committee-urges#:~:text=Verified%20figures%20show%20that%20in,rights%20violations%20is%20rising%20exponentially.>