

**MEDICAL ALERT ON ARMED VIOLENCE:
SAVE LIVES, PROTECT HEALTH
PASS A STRONG GLOBAL ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT)**

Firearm violence is a humanitarian crisis and a threat to development. Hundreds of thousands of people are killed each year with firearms, with millions more maimed or traumatized. The health cost of treating armed violence is a huge drain on health budgets. National and international investment in combating it also diverts monetary and human capital from other vital needs. Evidence supports that limiting access to firearms saves lives, prevents injuries and reduces costs to society.

Yet there are currently no legally binding, global rules regulating the trade in conventional arms.

The World Health Organization (WHO), in its landmark 2002 *World Report on Violence and Health*, made seeking “practical, internationally agreed responses to the global drugs trade and the global arms trade” one of its nine priority recommendations to mobilize action in response to violence.

We, as medical professionals who dedicate ourselves to preserving life and promoting health, are deeply concerned that the international trade in arms, when undertaken irresponsibly, contributes to armed conflict and firearm violence. This in turn undermines health, human rights, safety, security, stability and sustainable social and economic development. Therefore, we support a strong and humanitarian-focused ATT to prevent misuse of arms.

The world’s governments will convene in 2012 at the United Nations to finalize negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty. We, the international health community, strongly endorse and support this process as vitally necessary to prevent arms misuse, save lives and promote health worldwide. We support the goal of a rigorous and legally binding instrument that effectively prevents or reduces the devastating consequences of firearm violence and armed conflict around the globe.

The ATT must establish common international standards for the responsible transfer of all conventional weapons and their ammunition, including small arms and light weapons. For the ATT to have proper impact, its scope must be comprehensive and its transfer criteria must be strict to ensure that conventional weapons do not end up in the hands of those who use them irresponsibly or may be expected to misuse them.

I support the Medical Alert calling on the United Nations to pass a strong and humanitarian-focused Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). *Privacy Notice: IPPNW will not share your personal information with anyone other than petition recipients.*

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