



**UNA-UK**

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Dear Minister,

Thank you for your reply of 3 September to my letter, dated 31 July, concerning the future of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) following July's inconclusive negotiations at the UN.

UNA-UK is pleased that HMG recognises the importance of this issue and is committed to securing a robust ATT as soon as possible. We also note with reassurance that, following the Prime Minister's recent reshuffle, the FCO Counter Proliferation team remains unchanged. It is reassuring to be able to count on your personal engagement in, and leadership on, the ATT.

Whilst we agree with your assessment that the draft text that emerged from the Diplomatic Conference provides a good basis for further work, we remain concerned that the text, if adopted as it stands, would not bring about the significant improvements we all desire.

If the ATT is to be effective and enforceable, it is vital that signatory states should be required to build in strong and binding provisions on transparency and reporting so that parliaments around the world can help ensure effective scrutiny of arms transfers. As you are aware, the draft text does not at present include such provisions.

We are also disappointed that the current text leaves scope for existing defence contracts and ammunitions to be excluded from the treaty's coverage, and that the standards for refusing transfers on the basis of human rights concerns are much too low.

UNA-UK, with its grass-roots membership across the country, strongly believes that although a treaty with broad participation has advantages, a robust ATT, even if not all states are willing to ratify it in the short term, will prove far more effective in the long run than a weaker text that every state can subscribe to but that does not represent tangible progress. A weak treaty risks both institutionalising unacceptably low regulatory standards for arms transfers and legitimising irresponsible behaviour. It would still give too much legal cover to those selling weapons that fuel conflict and instability.

Success in strengthening this text and in gathering sufficient co-sponsors for a strong treaty will depend to a large extent on the UK's continued political leadership and diplomatic efforts, which have been impressive to date even if compromises have been made. We sincerely hope that the FCO will redouble its efforts to achieve a robust and effective ATT that will finally reduce the human suffering associated with irresponsible arms proliferation.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Jeremy Greenstock  
Chairman, UNA-UK