



UNA-UK

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Alistair Burt MP
Minister of State
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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Dear Minister,

I am writing as Chairman of the UN Association UK (UNA-UK) to express our disappointment at the delay in negotiating an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and to urge the UK government to do all it can to secure a robust, watertight treaty as soon as possible.

Despite the decision to postpone agreement, we were heartened by the widespread support for an ATT displayed during the negotiations. We were especially pleased that the UK joined more than 90 other states in issuing a statement at the end of the conference reiterating their determination to push for a strong treaty. Like UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, we believe that "considerable common ground" now exists and we hope that states will be able to build on this momentum, ideally at the UN General Assembly this autumn.

While UNA-UK firmly believes that a robust ATT is within our reach, we are concerned that the latest draft text still contains loopholes that would allow the transfer of arms where a substantial risk exists that they would facilitate serious violations of international law; destabilise or exacerbate existing conflicts; or be diverted to unauthorised users.

The UK has long championed a strong Arms Trade Treaty and has played a leading role in securing progress since ATT discussions began in earnest six years ago. We urge the UK to continue to show leadership and push for a treaty that:

- Includes the widest possible range of conventional arms, ammunition and components
- Makes explicit reference to international human rights and humanitarian law
- Prevents arms transfers – with no exceptions – when there is a high risk that they will be used against civilians or to commit human rights abuses
- Covers existing arms deals, as well as arms supplied as gifts or through military assistance programmes

While a treaty with broad participation is, of course, desirable, we strongly feel that a robust treaty – even if not all states are willing to sign it in the short term – will prove far more effective in the long run than a weaker treaty that every state can subscribe to and subsequently ignore.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Jeremy Greenstock
Chairman, UNA-UK