



Sept 25, 2013

United States Signs Historic Arms Trade Treaty – Canada Yet to Sign On

Ottawa – The Canadian members of the Control Arms Coalition today welcomed the United States decision to sign the Arms Trade Treaty, a global effort to reduce loss of life from the unregulated trade in weapons and ammunition. Oxfam Canada, Project Ploughshares, Amnesty International and Oxfam Québec also expressed frustration and disappointment at Canada's failure to sign on.

"Canada has a moral responsibility to help protect the lives of innocent civilians, particularly women and children", said Lina Holguin, Policy Director for Oxfam Québec. "Why is Canada withholding its signature on a treaty that aims to keep weapons out of the hands of criminals, terrorists and mercenaries? It is incomprehensible."

The Arms Trade Treaty sets global standards for tighter controls on arms transfers and requires exporting governments to stop shipments when there is a major risk the weapons would be used to violate human rights or commit war crimes.

"More than half of UN member states have now signed the Arms Trade Treaty," stated Ken Epps, Senior Program Officer, Project Ploughshares. "It is past time for Canada to get beyond spurious claims that the treaty will affect legal Canadian gun-owners and join the states that want to save lives by ending irresponsible arms transfers."

Amnesty International Canada's Hilary Homes stated: *"Not signing a treaty sends a signal to the international community. Does Canada, once a champion of arms control, really feel that the Arms Trade Treaty isn't important?"*

Sabina Saini of Make Poverty History said: *"As thousands of Canadians have spoken out in favour of the Arms Trade Treaty, we are surprised that the government has not signed it."*

The Treaty includes a ground-breaking provision concerning the use of conventional weapons to commit serious acts of violence against women and girls, including rape and other sexual violence.

Robert Fox, Executive Director of Oxfam Canada, said: *"Every day, conventional arms are used to commit serious acts of violence against women and girls, including rape. We are deeply disappointed that Canada has not signed the treaty as this undermines our ability to champion women's rights, peace and security. We urge the Canadian Government to sign without delay."*

With the endorsement of the United States, the accord now has 105 signatories, more than double the minimum fifty required to bring the treaty into force, once ratified.

For more information:

Melanie Gallant
Media Relations
Oxfam Canada
613-240-3047
www.oxfam.ca