
United Nations, New York) Nearly a year after the start of a UN process to negotiate a new global arms trade treaty, 192 states came close to agreement on a treaty to require better regulation of the global arms trade and to set common-sense standards for arms transfers.

However, the United States, followed by Russia, announced earlier today that a few remaining issues (none of which are core treaty issues) must be clarified and that there is not enough time to resolve them.

"President Obama should have--but did not--provide the leadership necessary to close the deal on the arms trade treaty and help reduce human suffering caused irresponsible international arms transfers and arms brokering," said Daryl G. Kimball, Executive Director of the Washington-based Arms Control Association.

Although the U.S. delegation had succeeded in inserting all of its preferred formulations in the treaty text and avoided all "red lines," the conference was told this morning that several issues must be further clarified or language must be further adjusted.

"The important support and momentum for a sound arms trade treaty must not be lost," said Kimball.

A statement read by Mexico on behalf of a group of over 90 countries--including France,
United States, Others Miss Chance on Global Arms Trade Treaty

Germany, and the U.K.--at the close of the conference declared: "We came to New York to achieve a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty. We had expected to adopt such a draft Treaty today. We believe we were very close to reaching our goals."

"Compromises have had to be made, but overall the text you put forward yesterday has the overwhelming support of the international community as a base for carrying forward our work," the governments' statement read. "We believed that this would have been possible with extra work today and only very reluctantly now see that this is not possible," they declared.

The group called upon the conference president, Ambassador Moritan of Argentina, "to report to the General Assembly on the progress we have made, so that we can finalize our work. We are determined to secure an Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible."

At its core, the treaty would establish common international standards that must be met before arms transfers are authorized. It would require regular reporting of such transfers, which would help improve transparency and accountability. It has the potential to close the gaps in the current international system by requiring countries to adopt basic regulations and approval processes for the flow of weapons and ammunition in and out of their borders and for arms brokering. The latest treaty text also recognized "the sovereign right and responsibility of any State to regulate and control transfers of conventional arms that take place exclusively in their territory ...."

The most recent treaty text:

- would have required that states establish national import and export regulations that guard against irresponsible export of ammunition;
- included a prohibition on arms transfers to states for the purpose of facilitating the commission of acts of genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity;
- would have obligated states not to authorize arms transfers if they determine there is an "overriding risk" that the transfer will be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

"We urge the United States and other arms exporters and importers, including China, Russia, the U.K., and India, to work with the large group supporters, especially those most affected by violence fueled by illicit arms dealing, to conclude a sound agreement this year," Kimball urged.