

Youth Delegation Switzerland – Statement

Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and too many others. We are only at the beginning of the century and we have already so many conflicts on our hands: causing bloodbaths, millions of displaced persons, starvation, gender based violence, destruction of hospitals and schools, and irreversible effects on the environment.

We, the youth from Switzerland, stand in solidarity with all youths affected by armed conflict and armed violence. There is so much violence in our world today, so much indifference. As Elie Wiesel said, « *Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees - not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own.* »

Today, in many countries, people are suffering the consequences of armed violence and conflict, which are fuelled by the irresponsible trade of arms and the often uncontrolled flow of weapons.

Can we truly continue to live, denying their suffering happening in front of our eyes, as if we didn't know? Human suffering caused by irresponsible arms trade is the responsibility of all of us. People who use arms are not the only ones responsible; those who provide those arms are also responsible. It is time to acknowledge that responsibility. It's time to act.

Let us stand together against irresponsible arms transfers that fuel conflicts and serious human rights violations. Let us determine our own destiny and begin to shape a better future. Not only a better future, but a better present. Because it starts now and it starts here.

This is why we are here today for the Arms Trade Treaty conference in Geneva. The Arms Trade Treaty, the ATT raised hopes and made promises which don't seem to be properly fulfilled yet. So far much time and energy was spent on process. Now it is time to make the Arms Trade Treaty work:

- We urge all states parties of the ATT to take concrete steps for its strict implementation.
- We call on the remaining signatories of the ATT to ratify it.
- We call on more states to accede to the ATT.
- And – above all – we urge all states to fulfil the promise of the ATT: To reduce human suffering caused by the irresponsible trade in conventional arms.

As youth growing up in a world plagued with conflict and armed violence, and in solidarity with youth all over the world, we believe youth have an important part to play in the ATT implementation process and therefore should be able to meaningfully participate in it.

We are asking for action. We are carefully monitoring the states' implementation of the ATT and will continue to do so.

It's time to acknowledge our responsibility, it's time to act.

Let's disarm indifference.

Background

A delegation of 12 young persons from two organisations in Switzerland – Amnesty Youth and the Swiss Youth Parliament – attend the Arms Trade Treaty conference in Geneva. The Youth Delegation Switzerland meets with representatives of State delegations and international NGOs and present their statement to the media and at the CSP.