



## Civil Society and the Drive towards an Arms Trade Treaty

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2012, pp. 29

An informative and detailed account of how the proposal for an Arms Trade Treaty to set international standards and controls upon the sale of arms, promoted in the 1990s by NGOs (such as Oxfam and Amnesty International) and by prominent individuals, for example Nobel Peace laureates, gained governmental support. The goal was not to stop all arms exports, but the more limited one of setting international standards for controlling sale of arms to strengthen national rules and to prevent weapons from intensifying conflicts or worsening human rights abuses. The Treaty was agreed at the UN General Assembly in April 2013 by 157 states, including the US under President Obama.

See also: Campaign Against the Arms Trade, 'Issues - Arms Trade Treaty' <https://www.caat.org.uk/issues/att> [3]

CAAT notes that the Arms Trade Treaty came into force in December 2014 when ratified by 50 states (including the UK), but explains their scepticism about the concept of a 'responsible' arms trade. CAAT claims the UK approves licenses which contravene the approved guidelines. and it should stop promoting arms sales A number of other sources sceptical about the Treaty are listed.

See also: 'Canada, 'Canada joins the Arms Trade Treaty while still selling arms to Saudi Arabia', *Oxfam*, 16 May 2019

<https://www.oxfam.ca/blog/canada-joins-the-arms-trade-treaty-while-still-selling-arms-to-saudi-arabia/> [4]

Oxfam comments that whilst Canadian eventual accession to the Treaty is a major victory for civil society, the government has not made moves to cancel its \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia, despite the Saudi record on human rights (denounced by the Trudeau government) and the Saudi role in the war in Yemen.

See also: Pecquet, Julian, 'UN Approval of Arms Trade Treaty sets up Obama, Senate Showdown', *The Hill*, 2 April 2013

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/291401-un-adopts-obama-backed-arms-trade-treaty-opposed-by-the-nra> [5]

Commentary on the domestic political context of Obama's decision to back the Arms Trade Treaty, opposed by 53 Senators and the National Rifle Association. In the light of domestic opposition the Obama Administration had delayed support for the UN treaty in the run-up to the November 2012 election. Pecquet also notes that the treaty passed with 154 votes; three countries opposed – North Korea, Syria and Iran – and 23 abstained.

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**20:49):**<https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2012/civil-society-and-drive-towards-arms-trade-treaty>

### Links

[1] <https://civilresistance.info/author/3278> [2] <https://civilresistance.info/author/3279> [3]

<https://www.caat.org.uk/issues/att> [4] <https://www.oxfam.ca/blog/canada-joins-the-arms-trade-treaty-while-still-selling-arms-to-saudi-arabia/> [5] <https://thehill.com/policy/international/291401-un-adopts-obama-backed-arms-trade-treaty-opposed-by-the-nra>