

Pax Christi International on Arms Trade Treaty

“Yes, I support a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty” : Invitation for ATT Campaigning.

Every day thousands of people are injured, killed, raped and forced to flee from their homes as a result of war and armed violence. The poorly regulated global **trade in arms and ammunition** causes violence, poverty and human rights abuses. To make an end to the suffering caused by weapons, a worldwide civil society alliance is calling for a **bulletproof Arms Trade Treaty**: a global, legally binding agreement that will ease the suffering caused by irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons and munitions.

The negotiation process for the ATT started with a UN General Assembly resolution in 2009. Preparatory meetings were held in 2009, 2010 and 2011. In 2012, a UN conference will be held where the final text will be negotiated. A strong and effective ATT that has a real impact on people's lives should be delivered.

Pax Christi International and many of its member organizations are already engaged in the global civil society movement advocating for a strong ATT. As we are heading for the final phase of the negotiations, we would strongly encourage all to join us in two campaigns for a strong and robust ATT.

The First campaign we present you, is the [Control Arms Interfaith Campaign](#) for an Arms Trade Treaty. This campaign is steered by the **Interfaith Working Group**, an informal group of religiously inspired organizations. Pax Christi International is a member of the Interfaith Working Group and supports this campaign. Religious leaders and communities have the potential to play an instrumental role in the success of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). They are frequently the first to recognize and speak up about the devastating impact of irresponsible arms use on communities, and the moral duty to regulate the trade of these deadly devices. The purpose of the Control Arms Interfaith Campaign is to raise awareness amongst religious leaders, communities and faith-based organizations about the Arms Trade Treaty. Religious communities and leaders from diverse faith traditions around the world will be working to foster greater knowledge and understanding about the Arms Trade Treaty in the lead up to the negotiations of the ATT in July 2012.

As part of the campaign, an [Interfaith Declaration](#) has been published in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. The Interfaith Declaration is a sign-on letter created by several member organizations of the Control Arms Coalition. It reinforces calls that have already been made by individual faith leaders and organizations for a strong, robust and morally-based Arms Trade Treaty. The declaration will be delivered to governments ahead of the ATT negotiations scheduled for July 2012. Pax Christi is inviting all our member organisations to contribute to this declaration by signing the declaration and by inviting and encouraging your local religious leaders of any religious tradition to do so and join this campaign. The Interfaith Declaration can be found on the webpage of the Control Arms Interfaith Campaign in different languages. If you want to sign the declaration or you convinced your religious leaders to do, please send us an [email](#) or send it to [Control Arms](#)

Another campaign Pax Christi International strongly supports and participates in, is the **Ecumenical Campaign for a Strong and Robust Arms Trade Treaty** of the **World Council of Churches**. Representatives of churches, related agencies and networks in 27 countries have signed up to take part in the campaign, which is underlining the important role local religious communities can play in the

lead-up to the final negotiations for a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty. Local communities, congregations and churches around the world are often witness to the ways in which armed violence fuels insecurity, breaks up families and escalates conflicts. Together, we can collect these stories and send them to world leaders when they gather at the UN. The Ecumenical campaign encourages a worldwide, collective but coherent campaign, speaking out a common message “[Yes, I support a strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty that will protect and save lives](#)”.

- Activities suggested to mobilize public awareness as well as contact with public officials and political leaders may include:
- Workshops and awareness-raising activities in parishes and communities.
- Gathering and publicizing stories and testimonies on issues related to the ATT, for example violations linked to armed violence, illicit trade in arms, violations of arms embargoes.
- Online publicity and networking.
- Meetings with church leaders and political leaders.
- Collecting signatures or other indications of public support
- Symbolic actions
- Letters to public officials.

A strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty will render illegal arms transfers difficult and will save lives. Heading to the final stage of negotiations, Pax Christi International is strongly encouraging the member organizations to join these awareness campaigns for a strong ATT. The international secretariat is willing to assist member organizations to put up national and local activities for your campaigns. If you are willing to take part in these campaigns, or you are already engaged in a set of activities for a strong ATT, please let us know and we will publish your initiatives!

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