

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates



March 14, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Subject: ***Securing a Strong Arms Trade Treaty***

Dear Mr. President:

As fellow Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, we write to urge you to take a leadership role in ensuring that the United States supports a successful outcome at the United Nations Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, to be convened in New York on 18–28 March 2013, as called for by the United Nations General Assembly.

The U.S. and other arms supplier states have both a moral duty and a national security interest to help achieve such a Treaty in order to protect human rights and save the lives of innocent civilians caught in the crosshairs of conflicts fuelled by the irresponsible international conventional weapons trade.

In Oslo you observed that the Nobel Peace Prize *“is an award that speaks to our highest aspirations – that for all the cruelty and hardship of our world, we are not mere prisoners of fate. Our actions matter and can bend history in the direction of justice.”* Your leadership in the U.S. for a strong Arms Trade Treaty is needed to deliver a safer, healthier, more secure future for the massive number of potential victims of armed violence in a world awash in armaments.

As humanitarians and peacemakers, we cannot accept the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people around the world who are gunned down each year, with millions left maimed and traumatized. The poorly regulated arms trade fuels conflict, violence, and serious violations of human rights, with devastating effects on health, security, and sustainable social and economic development.

The absence of effective, legally binding international rules regulating the arms trade represents a colossal failure of the international community. Now is the moment to right this profound injustice. It is time to act to end this humanitarian and human rights crisis.

We support a rigorous, comprehensive Treaty consistent with States obligations under international law, especially international human rights and humanitarian law, to prevent the misuse of arms. We support the establishment of common international standards for the responsible transfer of all conventional weapons and their ammunition.

We urge you, Mr. President, to join us in this historic endeavour that will require all states to take concrete measures to control international arms transfers to help ensure peace, health and prosperity for so many individuals, families, communities and nations.

We wish you strength in your actions.

In Peace,

Leymah Gbowee (2011)

Tawakkol Karman (2011)

Shirin Ebadi (2003)

Jimmy Carter (2002)

John Hume (1998)

Jody Williams (1997)

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (1997)

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs (1995)

Rigoberta Menchú Tum (1992)

Oscar Arias Sánchez (1987)

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (1985)

Desmond Mpilo Tutu (1984)

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel (1980)

Amnesty International (1977)

Mairead Corrigan Maguire (1976)

Betty Williams (1976)

American Friends Service Committee (1947)

International Peace Bureau (1910)