



The United Nations Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Alfred de Zayas, welcomed the adoption of first legally-binding UN Arms Trade Treaty that prohibits states from exporting conventional weapons to countries when they know those weapons will be used for genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

"Those who sell or facilitate weapons to individuals that will commit human rights violations know that they have responsibility for the death and misery caused by those weapons and at some stage may be liable to face the International Criminal Court for complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity," Mr. de Zayas warned.

For the human rights expert, the adoption of the treaty is a significant first step with the potential to reduce "the appalling human cost of the trade in conventional weapons and the conflicts they fuel. Undoubtedly, this treaty constitutes an historic moment toward the goal of meaningful disarmament and the reduction of hostilities," the expert stressed.

"However, the treaty is not perfect, since numerous ambiguities remain in the text which could end up favoring the arms industry," the expert said, stressing that nothing in the treaty prohibits

selling weapons to non-state entities. "More reflection is needed and a subsequent agreement should address outstanding issues that were left out in the final compromise. It is for civil society in the countries concerned to participate in this debate."

"The world needs to stop not only the trade but the production of arms, since once weapons have been produced, there is an incentive to use them and to continue producing them," he underscored. "All these resources and energy must be shifted away from the logic of armed conflict and toward the advancement of peace and the promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights."

"Peace, as the absence of war and of structural violence, cultural hegemonism and the eradication of extreme poverty -as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals, is a necessary condition for an international order that is more democratic and more equitable," he said

Recalling his 2012 reports\* to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly, Mr. de Zayas emphasized that the endorsing of the draft arms trade treaty was urgently needed for the realisation of a democratic and equitable international order.

**Additional links:**

**(\*) *Check the reports***

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- **Alfred de Zayas** (United States of America) was appointed as the first Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order by the Human Rights Council, effective May 2012. He is currently professor of international law at the Geneva School of Diplomacy. Mr. de Zayas practiced corporate law and family law in New York and Florida. As a Human Rights Council's mandate holder, he is independent from any government or organization and serves in his individual capacity. Learn more, [log on here](#)

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