

Tournay, 30th may 2013.

To all of you who seek for peace,
PEACE!

On this 3d June 2013, negotiations for the signature and ratifications of the Treaty on Arms Trade starts, in order to impose regulations and greater transparency in international arms export. In doing so, it also aims at preventing and eliminating the illicit trade of regular weapons and the embezzlement of these weapons.

Thanks to the commitment of NGOs and of several states, especially the United Kingdom and France, this process of negotiation has lasted 7 years. After intense negotiation, the treaty has been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations of the 2d April 2013. This outcome has opened the treaty to signature and it has been adopted by 154 voices against 3 (North Korea, Iran and Syria), and 23 abstentions, including China, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Russia. It will be applicable 90 days after the 50th ratification.

The trade of weapons represents approximately 80 billion dollars per year, with a general increase of 17% for conventional arms export on an international scale in the past decade. Six countries (China, the United-States, France, Israël, the United Kingdom and Russia) represent 90% of worldly new weapons export. The lack of regulation or control over this trade is the root of several cases of armed violence, wether it be a matter of crime or conflict, often involving poverty and extreme inequality.

The treaty deals with all international transfers (import, export, transit), and the commission of regular arms. Under this denomination, we find light weapons and small calibre guns like a pistol or a rifle, planes and warships, tanks and armoured vehicles, missiles, helicopter gunships and big calibre artillery. The treaty also imposes a system of national control to regulate the exportation of the munitions that will be used, thrown or delivered with regular weapons, as well as the pieces and parts of these arms.

The principle of the treatise is that each country has to evaluate, before any transaction, the risk that the weapons, munitions or pieces transferred in other countries are used to commit or facilitate serious violations of the Human Rights and of humanitarian international law - such as a genocide -, or fall into the hands of terrorists or criminals. In all of theses cases, the country that exports will have to refuse the transaction.

In this month of June, let us pray for this new treaty: may it be well received by the entire international community, may it be respected and become the sign of a new era for peace on Earth. Let us pray as such:

O God of Peace, the source of any good action, You who rule over the destiny of nations and who governs the world with your love, we present to you this new international treaty that regulates arms trade. May it help humanity to restrain violence and war, and to reduce human suffering. May it contribute to peace and international stability, may it encourage cooperation, transparency and responsible behaviour between the nations. Thus delivered from all source of fear and hatred, may we be able to build a mutual trust between the nations, guided by your Spirit, as a sign of peace that gives it strength! Amen!

With all my friendship, sincerely yours,

Brother Irénée Rezende Guimarães

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