

UN Arms Trade Treaty

June 23, 2020

China will join a global pact to regulate arms sales that has been rejected by the United States, with Beijing claiming that it is committed to efforts to enhance peace and stability in the world. A study in January by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said **China is now the second largest arms producer** in the world, behind the US.

About the Treaty

The treaty regulating the international trade in conventional arms—from small arms to battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships entered into force in 2014.

In all parts of the world, the ready availability of weapons and ammunition has led to human suffering, political repression, crime and terror among civilian populations. Irresponsible arms transfers can destabilize security in a region, enable the violation of Security Council arms embargoes and contribute to human rights abuses.

The treaty requires member countries to keep **records of international transfers of weapons and to prohibit cross-border shipments that could be used in human rights violations or attacks on civilians**. The swift entry into force of the ATT would be a clear indication of its signatories' willingness and determination to address the poorly regulated international arms trade.

India and the Treaty

India has been an active participant in the ATT negotiations. However it is not party to the treaty due to the following reasons:

- India cannot accept the Treaty being used as an

instrument in the hands of exporting states to take unilateral measures against importing states parties without consequences.

- India has maintained that such a treaty should make a real impact on illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their illicit use especially by terrorists and other unauthorised and unlawful non-state actors. However, the Treaty is **weak on terrorism and non-state actors** and these concerns find no mention in the specific prohibitions of the Treaty.