

In preparation for the Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty: Key issues at the Second Conference of States Parties and thereafter

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Since the 1990s onwards, there has been a proliferation of initiatives to agree to regional and 'global' instruments establishing common criteria for assessing arms transfer licenses. After a series of negotiations, the efforts culminated on 2 April 2013 with the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) at the United Nations General Assembly. The First Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP1) was held in Mexico in August 2015, the Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP2) was held in Switzerland in August 2016, and the Third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (CSP3) is scheduled to be held in Switzerland in September 2017.

While research abounds on the negotiation processes of conventional arms control agreements that have taken place since the 1990s and the roles of governmental and non-governmental actors in these negotiations, there is a striking absence of research on the implications of post-adoption processes and the roles of the wide range of actors in these processes. However, issues such as the rules of procedure for the Conference of States Parties (CSP), reporting mechanisms, and states parties' interpretation and implementation of the treaty have come under heated debate during the treaty's post-adoption processes, precisely because these issues seem to affect the treaty's transparency and effectiveness.

This article seeks to analyse the key issues at the CSP2 and thereafter, including reporting mechanisms, possible violations of the treaty by States Parties and signatory states, the relationship between the ATT and the Human Rights Council (HRC), mandates and openness of subsidiary bodies of the CSP, and membership and roles of the voluntary trust fund (VTF). Through tracing the policy debates over the key issues, it also tries to indicate potential areas of major disputes at the CSP3. As one of the participants of the CSP process of the ATT, the author hopes to record this historic moment and to provide the basis for policy debates ahead of the upcoming CSP3 as well as for the future research on, and evaluation of, this process.