

12 April 2012

Mr Eamon Gilmore TD  
Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Department of Foreign Affairs,  
Iveagh House,  
Dublin 2

## **Re UN international arms trade treaty**

Dear Tánaiste

In July this year, the UN will host a conference to negotiate an International Arms Trade Treaty with the aim of controlling the illicit global arms trade and monitoring the flow of small arms and conventional weapons across borders. As part of a global union campaign, Congress urges you to press for a strong, legally binding agreement to tackle the suffering caused by irresponsible transfers of conventional weapons and munitions.

In particular, Congress urges the Irish Government to support a treaty which:

- ensures no transfer of arms is permitted when there is substantial risk the arms will be used to commit serious violations of the UN Charter, international human rights law and international humanitarian law;
- is all-inclusive and covers all weapons, all transfers and all transactions;
- covers all military, security, and police arms, related equipment and ammunition, and training; and
- is workable, enforceable and includes provisions and guidelines for implementation, international cooperation and reporting, dispute settlement and enforcement.

Every day men, women and children around the world are killed, maimed and terrorised as a direct result of the irresponsible international arms trade. Small arms are the main armament of combatants in civil conflicts. They are employed by terrorists, warlords and by organized crime, and as such have been the cause of most casualties, including among civilians, in recent conflicts. The unlawful cross-border trade in small arms and ammunition occurs with little transparency and few restrictions, and fuels conflict, aggravates human rights violations and deepens poverty. It also contributes to violence against women.

regulation of the production and trading of arms and therefore supports a UN treaty to regulate the trade in small arms.

This July is the crucial moment if the world is to make progress on regulating the trade in conventional weapons, and Congress therefore urges you to seek a UN Arms Trade Treaty which meets the above criteria. I would be grateful if you could let me know what the Government's current position on these matters is.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Begg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Begg  
General Secretary