

“Mission is service, a call to help people in need and to permeate all of life with the compassion of God.” Living Faith 9.1.3

Advocate. Uphold dignity. Defend human rights. Honour God’s creation.

Please respond to this urgent action request by **Friday, July 31, 2013.**

UNITED NATIONS APPROVES ARMS TRADE TREATY

On April 2, 2013, member states of the United Nations General Assembly approved, with overwhelming support, an historic international Arms Trade Treaty. Our partner Project Ploughshares has been working with governments and NGOs to advocate for such a treaty for almost twenty years. This is a moment to celebrate a landmark achievement. The ATT has the potential to reduce suffering and to save lives. Now is the time for Canada to sign the Treaty!

What do we need to know about the ATT?

- The ATT enshrines in international law, rules for the cross-border transfer of weapons and ammunition.
- It creates universal standards for governments to assess arms transfer to ensure that weapons will not be used for human rights abuses, terrorism, transnational organized crime or violations of humanitarian law.
- The ATT requires that governments that have ratified the Treaty refuse any transfer of weapons that violate these rules. Countries that do not ratify the Treaty are not subject to its rules.
- Only Iran, Syria and North Korea opposed the ATT.
- The ATT sets down rules for the international trade and transfer of weapons. It has nothing to do with domestic gun ownership.

What’s next?

The Treaty text has been finalized and approved. The next step is for United Nations member states to sign and ratify (these are separate processes) the ATT. To date, 72 countries have signed the Treaty. Now, it’s Canada’s turn.

How can we help?

Canada is reviewing its domestic laws to ensure they comply with the ATT. Let’s not lose momentum! Write to your federal Member of Parliament. Commend the Government of Canada for voting in favour of the Treaty. Encourage your MP to advocate that the Government of Canada sign the Treaty and then submit it to Parliament for ratification. A template letter is below. Please write by Friday, July 31, 2013. Let Justice Ministries know you have written. Pray that the Treaty is signed by the Government of Canada and ratified by Parliament. Pray for the thousands of men, women and children who face the devastation of armed conflict.

What you can do

Write to your MP.
Commend the Government of Canada’s decision to vote for the ATT.
Encourage the Government to sign and that Parliament ratifies the ATT.

Pray for those affected by armed conflict.

Want to know more?

[Read about the Treaty](#)

[Read about Project Ploughshares](#)

LETTER TEMPLATE

Insert the date here.

Dear (insert your MP's name here),

On April 2, 2013, Canada joined 153 other countries to approve an historic Arms Trade Treaty. The Presbyterian Church in Canada's partner organization Project Ploughshares has advocated for such a Treaty for nearly twenty years. I celebrate this landmark achievement, and I am proud that Canada voted "yes"!

This is an important opportunity for Canada to join other countries and relieve some of the misery faced by thousands of men, women and children who face the devastating consequences of armed conflict.

I encourage the Government of Canada to sign and for Parliament to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

Rest assured that I pray for you and all Members of Parliament as you consider Canada's response to the Arms Trade Treaty.

In grace and peace,

(Insert your name, and federal riding)

Sending your letter:

You can find e-mail addresses and constituency office mailing addresses for individual Members of Parliament in the [Members of Parliament](#) directory. The House of Commons recesses on Friday, June 21, 2013 (which is why we suggest sending mail to your MP's constituency office).

E-mail Katharine Masterton (kmasterton@presbyterian.ca) to let us know you wrote.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

"...the tragic evil that comes with war, the slaughter of men women, and children must rouse us to work for peace. We protest against the world arms race that diminishes our ability to fight hunger, ignorance, poverty and disease...We affirm that God is at work when people are ashamed of the inhumanity of war and for peace with justice." Living Faith, 8.5.2-3.

God of Peace, in Isaiah's vision of your Kingdom, spears are turned into pruning hooks and swords into ploughshares. Tools of war, fear and oppression become tools for harvest, provision and sustenance. This vision challenges us to be makers and builders of peace.

Open our ears to the cries of those who suffer. Let their cries become our cries. Help us to be protectors of the weak, healers for the sick, and advocates for all seeking your justice. Give us the wisdom and courage to discern and use the things that make for peace.

Compassionate God, we strive to live in right relationship with our neighbours. We seek to live in right relationship with you. As nations, the calling to be makers of peace encompasses the work of the international community that develops treaties and policies intended to protect those who too often suffer in conflict. We thank you for the men and women who have advocated for an Arms Trade Treaty, and the member states of the United Nations General Assembly that voted in favour of the Treaty. We pray that governments around the world will sign and ratify the Treaty with all haste.

As you are the God of hope who brings joy, peace and love to the world, so let us be your instruments of peace.

We pray in the name of your son who is the Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Prepared by Justice Ministries, June 17, 2013.