



UK Mission
Geneva

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

ARMS TRADE TREATY

TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF STATE PARTIES

24-28 AUGUST 2026

General Debate

H.E. Mr. David Riley, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Conference
on Disarmament in Geneva

Monday 24 August

Madam President,

Across many regions, conflict, instability and growing international tensions are placing increasing pressure on the international system and on the norms that help safeguard peace and security – underscoring the importance of multilateral instruments like the ATT.

One stark example is Sudan, where war has raged for three years and triggered the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The UK has been working tirelessly to halt the fighting, protect civilians and to get aid to those who need it. But in a conflict marked by vested interests, unimaginable atrocities, catastrophic levels of hunger and the systematic use of rape as weapon of war, it is clear that current efforts are not enough.

There is no military solution to this conflict, yet armed actors persist because they continue to access ever more lethal weapons, with civilians bearing the brunt of this violence.

The situation in Sudan is not unique, but it is a stark reminder of why we need the ATT and why its universalisation matters. We welcome in this regard Vanuatu and Ecuador joining the Treaty as States Parties.

At a time of growing geopolitical tension, the Treaty provides a crucial framework for responsibility, transparency and cooperation. More than ever, we must work together to strengthen its implementation, expand its reach, and uphold the principles on which it was founded.

The UK remains optimistic about the future of the Treaty. We are committed to strengthening its implementation, universalisation and operation, and believe the development of a five-year strategy provides a constructive avenue for doing so.

Encouragingly, States Parties are actively engaged in shaping that work. The informal ATT Group of Friends has continued to grow since its creation last year and now brings together nineteen States Parties from every regional group. The Group provides an open and inclusive forum to exchange ideas, anticipate challenges and identify shared priorities in support of the Treaty's object and purpose. We invite interested States Parties to join these discussions.

The UK is also pleased to announce that we will fund a third Wilton Park conference in January 2027. It will provide a further opportunity for open and action-oriented discussion on the future of the Treaty and the development of the strategy.

The development of the strategy also provides an important opportunity to better articulate and demonstrate the Treaty's value and impact.

This is why the UK is proud to support the ATT Research Consortium's project, "Evaluating the Impact of the Arms Trade Treaty". Over the next eighteen months, the project will deliver the first comprehensive assessment of the ATT's contribution to national control systems, countering diversion and international cooperation and assistance, in support of peace, security and reducing human suffering.

At a time when conflict and instability continue to test the multilateral system, the ATT remains an essential tool. By working together to support the Treaty and its work, we can ensure it continues to deliver on its Object and Purpose.

Looking ahead to CSP13, and following the UK's expression of interest in the Presidency, we look forward to working with the entire ATT community to build on the Treaty's achievements and strengthen its impact for the years to come