



**Nonviolence International Southeast Asia Statement
on the Arms Trade Treaty Twelfth Conference of States Parties (CSP12)**

Agenda 4: General Debate
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Statement delivered by
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Madame, President, Excellencies, and distinguished delegates,

Good afternoon.

My name is Faith and I speak on behalf of Nonviolence International Southeast Asia.

Last year, for the first time, three young persons represented NISEA and they spoke during the 11th Conference of States Parties. That statement carried a simple message: young people deserve a place in decisions about weapons, peace, and safety of our communities.

Today, we return for a second year. We are here because listening to young people should become a lasting practice.

For many young people in Southeast Asia, the arms trade affects real life.

In June, three students were killed and others were hurt in a school shooting in Tacloban. Days before this Conference, another shooting in Zamboanga left two students dead and others injured. We remember those who died or were hurt, and the families, classmates, and teachers who are grieving. Schools should be places where children learn and dream without fear. These tragedies show why weapons must be stored safely, kept away from children, and controlled throughout their whole life.

A decision made in a meeting room can affect whether a young person reaches school safely, whether a family remains together, or whether a community can live without fear – and the worst that we have seen of these cases – a decision made in a meeting room decided whether an generation of young people like myself survives a genocide.

This is why the Arms Trade Treaty must work to protect people. Every decision on transfer of weapons, be it selling or just merely passing through, weapons must put human life and safety first.

Before allowing a weapons transfer, governments must ask important questions:

Could these weapons be used to harm ordinary people?
Could they be used to break the rules of war that protect people?
Could they be used to hurt women, girls, or anyone because of their gender?
Could they end up in the wrong hands or be sold illegally?



The treaty must also keep up with the new kinds of weapons. Drones and weapons that can work partly by themselves may create new dangers. Clear rules and human control are needed. Governments must be open about their decisions and take responsibility when harm happens.

Older generations worked hard to create the Arms Trade Treaty. Our generation will inherit both its promise and the results of the choices made today. We therefore ask to be included as partners.

Young people should have a place in government meetings, regional discussions, civil society activities, and future Conferences. This must include young people from communities affected by violence and from countries whose voices are often left out.

Young people understand what is happening in their communities. We can help connect the words spoken in Geneva with the lives of people at home.

We ask States to follow the Treaty fully, share honest information, stop weapons from reaching the wrong hands, and help countries that need support. We also ask States to apply the same rules to everyone. Every life has equal value.

Last year, young people opened a door at this Conference. This year, we walk through it and hold it open for others.

Peace is something we must build together, starting today.

Thank you.