



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an agreement in next months Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) negotiations in his remarks to the Security Council's debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The Secretary-General said that civilians in many countries across the globe continued to suffer and die in conflict zones across the globe, but emphasized that it was not the warring parties' sole responsibility.

"We all have a responsibility to protect... violence against civilians is also unquestionably abetted by the free flow of weapons...we urgently need a robust and comprehensive agreement that addresses the humanitarian impact of the poorly regulated trade in arms," the Secretary-General told the Security Council, referring to the ATT negotiations.

A conference will be convened in New York from [18 to 23 March 2013](#) to conclude the work begun in July 2012 to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which would establish high common standards for the international trade in conventional arms.

In his comments to the Security Council, the Secretary-General said that his internal review panel on United Nations action in Sri Lanka had raised important issues concerning how the United Nations and Member States could strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Mr. Ban made the following concrete recommendations as in his previous reports on enhancing the protection of civilians:

- All parties to conflict should avoid using explosive weapons with wide-area effect in populated areas.
- The Security Council must emphasize that States bear the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians.
- States should recognize the need for consistent engagement by humanitarian actors with all relevant State and non-State actors.
- All relevant authorities should expedite administrative, visa, travel and customs procedures to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments, equipment and personnel to people in need of protection and assistance.
- The Council should make greater use of commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions mandated by the United Nations to investigate and verify alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.
- The Council must ensure that peacekeeping operations mandated with protecting civilians have adequate resources. "It is particularly important that they are equipped to respond to conflict-related sexual violence."

Additional links:

- [UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty](#)
- [United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs](#)
- [UNODA - Arms Trade Treaty](#)

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