



Human Rights Due Diligence in Arms Transfers: A Shared Responsibility

August 26, 2026

13:30-15:00 (CEST) – Online

Side event co-organised by the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, on the margins of the Twelfth Conference of States Parties (CSP12) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) regulates the international trade in conventional weapons, including small arms, light weapons and ammunition. Since its entry into force in 2014, the ATT, now strong of 118 States Parties, has established common international standards to prevent weapons from fuelling conflict, armed violence and human rights violations. At its heart lies Article 7: before authorising an export, a State must assess the risk that the transfer could undermine peace and security or be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law, including serious acts of gender-based violence, consider measures to mitigate those risks, and refuse the transfer where the risk remains overriding.

Responsible arms transfers depend on a chain of decisions that no single actor controls alone. Governments authorise transfers; parliaments translate the ATT into domestic legislation, approve budgets, scrutinise export assessments and hold governments accountable. The defence industry sits closest to the product and often holds information essential to a sound Article 7 assessment. Drawing on frameworks such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, it also carries its own due diligence responsibility, which may extend to declining a sale even where an export licence has been granted. Civil society contributes the evidence and scrutiny that sharpen the work of all three.

Building on Article 7, discussions are under way within the ATT on the development of a voluntary human rights due diligence (HRDD) framework that would set out what responsible conduct looks like across this chain. Parliaments can give binding force at national level to standards that remain voluntary within the Treaty framework; industry can help shape the framework rather than merely be subject to it; and civil society can provide evidence, expertise, and independent scrutiny. Each link in the chain depends on the others for information, transparency and clear standards.

This side event brings all these actors together to explore how their roles connect around Article 7 and the developing HRDD framework. Through a moderated panel of parliamentarians, industry and civil society representatives, followed by an interactive discussion, it will examine where responsibilities overlap, where gaps may arise, and how stronger coordination can make both Article 7 and the emerging HRDD framework meaningful in practice.



Simultaneous interpretation
in English and French

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