

# TAKING STOCK OF ATT Reporting

AUGUST 2022

STIMSON

# The Stimson Center's Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project (ATT-BAP)

aims to assist States in understanding the obligations of the ATT and to promote effective implementation. ATT-BAP supports efforts to assist States in implementing the treaty and to ensure that reporting on the ATT is comprehensive and robust. ATT-BAP has developed tools to help provide a baseline for assessing State progress in implementing the ATT and to enable measurement of the treaty's impact and long-term effectiveness. These tools are also utilized for identifying State capacity and resource needs, including the identification of critical gaps and available resources to implement the ATT. The tools include a Ratification Checklist, the ATT-BAP Baseline Assessment Survey, and the ATT-BAP website, which includes country profiles, a national transfer control database, guidance for completing initial and annual reports, and numerous analytical reports.

The Stimson Center promotes international security, shared prosperity & justice through applied research and independent analysis, deep engagement, and policy innovation. For three decades, Stimson has been a leading voice on urgent global issues. Founded in the twilight years of the Cold War, the Stimson Center pioneered practical new steps toward stability and security in an uncertain world. Today, as changes in power and technology usher in a challenging new era, Stimson is at the forefront: Engaging new voices, generating innovative ideas and analysis, and building solutions to promote international security, prosperity, and justice.

More at [www.stimson.org](http://www.stimson.org).



STIMSON

## INTRODUCTION

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the first legally binding instrument to regulate the global trade in conventional arms. The treaty was adopted by the UN General Assembly in April 2013 and entered into force in December 2014. The ATT establishes common standards for international arms transfers and establishes mandatory reporting mechanisms with the aim of:

- ▶ contributing to international and regional peace, security, and stability;
- ▶ reducing human suffering; and
- ▶ promoting cooperation, transparency, and responsibility in the international arms trade.

Eight years after the ATT's entry into force, significant steps have been taken to fulfill the treaty's obligations. One of the most quantifiable and easiest to measure metrics of treaty implementation is ATT reporting.

The ATT requires States Parties to submit two reports to the ATT Secretariat:

- ▶ First, States Parties are required to submit an initial report on treaty implementation that provides details on national laws and measures regulating arms transfers. States Parties are required to update this report should they make changes to their national arms transfer control systems. Initial reports are due within the first year of the ATT's entry into force for that State Party. Accordingly, initial reporting deadlines vary; the first 53 States Parties to the ATT were required to submit their initial reports by 23 December 2015, while the ATT's most recent State Party (the Philippines) has until 21 June 2023 to do so.
- ▶ Second, States Parties are obliged to submit annual reports on authorized or actual arms exports and imports that occurred during the previous calendar year. These reports are due by 31 May each year. In practice, however, the ATT Secretariat extends a seven-day grace period for the submission of annual reports, creating a de facto annual reporting deadline of 7 June each year. The first annual reports were due 31 May 2016 and cover the 2015 calendar year.

### ATT Reporting Obligations

**Article 13(1):** Each State Party shall, within the first year after entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party, in accordance with Article 22, provide an initial report to the Secretariat of measures undertaken in order to implement this Treaty, including national laws, national control lists and other regulations and administrative measures. Each State Party shall report to the Secretariat on any new measures undertaken in order to implement this Treaty, when appropriate. Reports shall be made available, and distributed to States Parties by the Secretariat.

**Article 13(3):** Each State Party shall submit annually to the Secretariat by 31 May a report for the preceding calendar year concerning authorized or actual exports and imports of conventional arms covered under Article 2 (1). Reports shall be made available, and distributed to States Parties by the Secretariat. The report submitted to the Secretariat may contain the same information submitted by the State Party to relevant United Nations frameworks, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Reports may exclude commercially sensitive or national security information.

Comprehensive and consistent ATT reporting has a number of important and tangible benefits for States, the ATT Secretariat, civil society researchers, and other stakeholders, including:

- ▶ Indicating how States Parties **interpret and implement** the treaty's obligations;
- ▶ Providing an opportunity for reporting States Parties to **assess their national control systems, identify gaps, and make adjustments** as needed;
- ▶ Helping to identify **good practices** and offering insights into **common definitions and patterns** in control measures;
- ▶ Shining a light on **assistance needs to advance treaty implementation** and States Parties that might be in a position to provide such assistance;
- ▶ Capturing treaty compliance and helping to determine **the extent to which the treaty is meeting its potential** in strengthening arms transfer regulations, improving transparency, and ultimately mitigating harm;
- ▶ Enhancing awareness of **regional and global arms flows**;
- ▶ Facilitating assessments of **treaty compliance**, particularly related to export and import decisions;
- ▶ Supporting efforts to monitor whether weapons use complies with **international human rights and humanitarian law**;
- ▶ Providing a baseline of ATT implementation measures that can be used to **evaluate subsequent developments** in national control systems, **outline paths to compliance**, and **provide other States with blueprints for reform**;
- ▶ Providing a baseline of legally transferred arms that can be used to **identify illicit arms and their potential sources**;
- ▶ Contributing towards the **detection of early warning signs of potential conflict**, such as potentially destabilizing weapons accumulations;
- ▶ Providing a **basis for bilateral or multilateral consultations** on transfers that may not align with ATT obligations; and
- ▶ Promoting **transparency and building confidence** among States involved in the global arms trade.

These benefits are not necessarily unique to ATT reporting. Other conventional arms-related reporting mechanisms were already in existence at the time of the ATT's adoption in 2013, and reports submitted under these frameworks can also provide important insights into conventional arms transfers and national transfer control systems. The UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA), which was established in 1991, invites States to submit voluntary annual reports on their arms exports and imports. States are also invited to share information on their national small arms and light weapons (SALW) control measures in voluntary reports submitted every two years under the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA), which was established in 2001.

However, unlike the UNROCA and PoA, reporting under the ATT is mandatory. As the first and only international instrument to legally require States Parties to report on their arms transfers and transfer control systems, the treaty is uniquely well-positioned to advance arms trade transparency in ways these pre-existing transparency frameworks have not – including by increasing reporting levels and providing unique insights not captured in other reports.

## Milestones in ATT Reporting

**2 APRIL 2013**  
ATT is adopted

**23 DECEMBER 2015**  
First initial reports are due

**24 DECEMBER 2014**  
ATT enters into force

**31 MAY 2016**  
First annual reports are due

But is the treaty living up to its potential? As we approach the 10th anniversary of the ATT's adoption, we can take stock of progress made in implementing the treaty and in particular its reporting obligations. This report provides reflections on the trends, challenges, gaps, good practices, and lessons learned from the first seven years of ATT reporting – and in doing so, highlights the lack of universal compliance, increases in private reporting, and transparency issues that threaten to undermine the treaty's potential. The report assesses the extent to which the ATT has meaningfully advanced transparency in the global arms trade and offers a roadmap for enhancing reporting efforts in the years ahead. This report is the fourth in Stimson's ATT-Baseline Assessment Project series that takes stock of reporting under the treaty.<sup>1</sup>

This report is organized into four sections. Part one examines key trends that have emerged over the first seven years of reporting under the ATT. Part two provides insights into ATT reporting methods, experiences, and challenges drawn from survey research and interviews with States Parties. In part three, these reporting trends and insights are incorporated into analysis of the ATT's overall impact on arms trade transparency. Finally, part four offers recommendations for the ATT Working Group on Transparency and Reporting (WGTR), Secretariat, and States Parties to strengthen reporting under the treaty.



FLICKR.COM/MARCIN WICHARY

<sup>1</sup> For more, see: Stimson Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project, *Taking Stock of ATT Initial Reports*, February 2022, <http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Taking-Stock-of-ATT-Initial-Reports-compressed.pdf>; *Taking Stock of ATT Annual Reports*, February 2022, <http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Taking-Stock-of-ATT-Annual-Reports.pdf>; *Taking Stock of ATT Reporting Trends and Challenges*, April 2022, <http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Taking-Stock-of-ATT-Reporting-Trends-and-Challenges.pdf>.

## METHODOLOGY

This report is based on ATT initial and annual report submission data as provided on the ATT Secretariat's website as of 21 July 2022 and in the Secretariat's public presentations.<sup>2</sup> This report also incorporates UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA) and UN Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) reporting data as provided on the PoA and UNROCA websites administered by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs as of 21 July 2022.<sup>3</sup> Where this report analyzes the content of ATT initial and annual report submissions, it relies solely on information derived from publicly available reports and not on reports that States Parties have posted only on the restricted area of the ATT Secretariat's website.

This report also draws on insights gleaned from surveys and interviews Stimson has conducted with government officials to better understand their ATT reporting experiences and challenges. The report includes anonymized survey data obtained from a joint research project between Stimson and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).<sup>4</sup> The survey solicited government perspectives on various aspects of ATT implementation and included questions focused specifically on national reporting processes, practices, and challenges. The survey was distributed in November 2020 to all 110 States Parties and 31 signatories to the ATT.<sup>5</sup> Surveys were also shared with 18 non-signatory States that had attended at least one ATT Conference of States Parties or were among the world's top arms exporters or importers in 2019, according to SIPRI estimates. Responses were collected through February 2021.

A total of 35 States responded to the survey, including 34 States Parties and one non-signatory State. Nineteen of these States provided additional information in response to follow-up questions from Stimson researchers to elaborate upon or clarify their survey responses. The survey respondents are not a representative sample of all ATT States Parties.<sup>6</sup>

Information from these reports, surveys, and interviews is captured in this report as it was provided by States Parties. Percentages reflected in the analysis are rounded to the nearest whole number and therefore may not equate to 100 percent in all cases.

<sup>2</sup> ATT Secretariat, "Initial Reports," <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/initial-reports.html?templateId=209839>; "Annual Reports," <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/annual-reports.html?templateId=209826>; "Arms Trade Treaty: Status of Reporting," Second Meeting of the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, 28 April 2022, [https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20\(28.04.2022\)/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20\(28.04.2022\).pdf](https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20(28.04.2022)/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20(28.04.2022).pdf).

<sup>3</sup> UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, "National Reports," <https://smallarms.un-arm.org/national-reports/>; UN Register of Conventional Arms, <https://www.unroca.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> Stimson Center Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project, *Taking Stock of ATT Reporting Trends and Challenges*, April 2022, <http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Taking-Stock-of-ATT-Reporting-Trends-and-Challenges.pdf>. Insights in this report were also drawn from Stimson's previous surveys and interviews. For more, see: Stimson Center Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project, *Reporting in Review: Examining ATT Reporting Experiences*, August 2017, [http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Reporting-in-Review-Examining-ATT-Reporting-Experiences\\_ATT-BAP.pdf](http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Reporting-in-Review-Examining-ATT-Reporting-Experiences_ATT-BAP.pdf); *Reporting Challenges and Assistance Needs in the Asia-Pacific Region*, 2017, [http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ATT-BAP\\_Reporting-Challenges-and-Assistance-Needs-in-the-Asia-Pacific-Region\\_2017-1.pdf](http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ATT-BAP_Reporting-Challenges-and-Assistance-Needs-in-the-Asia-Pacific-Region_2017-1.pdf); *The Arms Trade Treaty and the Caribbean Community: Towards Comprehensive Implementation*, August 2018, [http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ATT-BAP\\_ATT-and-CARICOM\\_August-2018.pdf](http://www.armstrade.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ATT-BAP_ATT-and-CARICOM_August-2018.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Since the survey was administered, one of these 31 signatories (the Philippines) ratified the treaty, bringing the total number of ATT States Parties to 111.

<sup>6</sup> For example, compared to the ATT's 111 States Parties, States in Europe as well as those considered to be among the world's top arms exporters, according to SIPRI estimates, were overrepresented among the survey respondents. In addition, States considered to be least developed countries, according to United Nations classifications, were underrepresented.

## REPORTING TRENDS

The ATT has great potential to promote transparency around the global trade in conventional arms. However, the first seven years of reporting under the ATT have been characterized by uneven rates of compliance with the treaty's reporting obligation, increasing levels of private reporting, and reporting practices that limit the insights that even publicly submitted reports can provide.

### COMPLIANCE

One of the most significant trends to emerge over the first seven years of ATT reporting is the lack of universal compliance with the treaty's initial and annual reporting requirements. As of 21 July 2022, all but one of the 111 States Parties to the ATT are required to have submitted an initial report on treaty implementation and at least one annual report on their arms exports and imports.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, all States Parties are required to "report to the Secretariat on any new measures undertaken in order to implement this Treaty, when appropriate." While the treaty does not provide specific instructions for States Parties to report this information, one option available to States Parties is to provide the Secretariat with an updated initial report.

The ATT requires States Parties to submit their initial reports within one year of the treaty's entry into force for that State Party. The treaty requires annual reports to be submitted by 31 May each year – though, in practice, the ATT Secretariat extends a seven-day grace period, creating a de facto annual reporting deadline of 7 June. While States Parties should strive to submit their reports on time, both to fulfill their treaty obligations and to facilitate comprehensive and timely analyses of arms transfers and treaty implementation, it is good practice for States Parties to submit their required reports even if the deadline has passed. The submission of late reports can help close information gaps, strengthen transparency over time, and reinforce the binding nature of the treaty's reporting requirements.

### ► Trends in Initial Reporting

Nearly two-thirds of States Parties have overdue initial reports. Of the 110 States Parties due to submit an initial report, only 86 have done so, equaling an initial reporting compliance rate of 78 percent. Only forty-two of these 86 States Parties submitted their initial reports on time.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, only six of these States Parties have provided the Secretariat with updated initial reports, despite several additional States Parties indicating in private workshops, meetings, and interviews with Stimson researchers that they have modified their transfer control systems in response to the ATT since submitting their initial reports.<sup>9</sup> While some of these additional States Parties have reported to the Secretariat on new measures undertaken to implement the ATT through other means – for example, by providing this information in their ATT annual reports or in their interventions at ATT meetings – it is unclear whether all these States Parties have done so.

**78%**

of required initial reports have been submitted

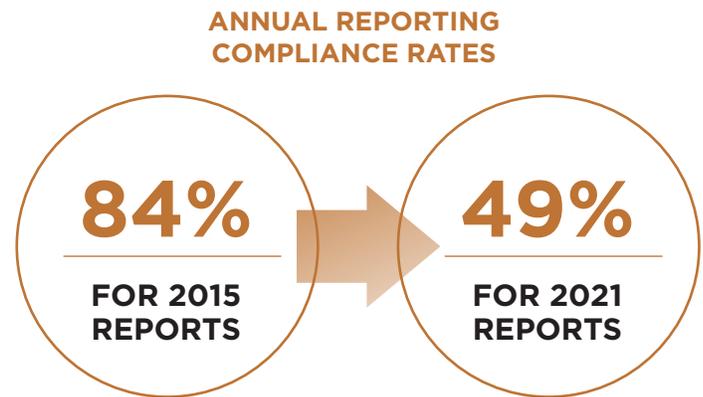
<sup>7</sup> Only the ATT's newest State Party, the Philippines, is not yet required to have submitted either an initial or annual report.

<sup>8</sup> ATT Secretariat, "Arms Trade Treaty: Status of Reporting."

<sup>9</sup> The six States Parties that have provided the ATT Secretariat with updated initial reports are Hungary, Japan, New Zealand, Romania, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## ► Trends in Annual Reporting

Annual reporting also does not enjoy universal compliance. Only 79 of the 110 States Parties due to submit at least one annual report (or 72 percent) have done so, and just 49 (or 45 percent) have submitted all of their required annual reports. Furthermore, with an average of 60 States Parties submitting annual reports each year between 2016 and 2022 – despite the number of States Parties due to submit annual reports increasing from 61 to 110 during that period – the percentage of States Parties fulfilling their annual reporting obligations has declined nearly every year. Annual reporting compliance rates fell from 84 percent for 2015 annual reports to a record-low 49 percent for 2021 annual reports.<sup>10</sup>



As with initial reports, States Parties have often submitted their annual reports late. On-time annual reporting compliance has never risen above 50 percent in any given year. In 2020 and 2021, several States Parties described how the COVID-19 pandemic created considerable challenges to on-time annual reporting including personnel shortages, staff turnover, and difficulty accessing and sharing information. Accordingly, only 38 percent of required 2019 annual reports were submitted on time in 2020 – a record low. In 2022, just 44 percent of States Parties due to report on arms transfers from the previous year submitted their 2021 annual report on time.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 1: On-Time Annual Reporting Over Time**

Reporting Year	Reports Due and Submitted On-Time <sup>12</sup>	On-Time Compliance Rate (as a percent of reports due)
2015	30	49%
2016	31	41%
2017	37	42%
2018	46	50%
2019	37	38%
2020	46	44%
2021	48	44%

<sup>10</sup> As of 21 July 2022, 54 States Parties are listed on the Secretariat’s website as having submitted their 2021 annual reports, representing a compliance rate of 49 percent. However, the Secretariat’s website also indicates that 55 2021 annual reports have been submitted. The reason behind this discrepancy is not entirely clear. While it may be the case that 55 2021 annual reports have in fact been submitted, this report can only use the reports of the 54 States Parties that are available on the ATT Secretariat’s website.

<sup>11</sup> The number of on-time 2021 ATT annual reports (48, or 44 percent of those due) was provided in an email from the ATT Secretariat on 14 July 2022.

<sup>12</sup> The number of 2015-2020 annual reports due and submitted on time is based on data provided in the ATT Secretariat’s 28 April 2022 status of reporting presentation: ATT Secretariat, “Arms Trade Treaty: Status of Reporting,” Second Meeting of the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, 28 April 2022, [https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20\(28.04.2022\)/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20\(28.04.2022\).pdf](https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20(28.04.2022)/220428%20-%20ATT%20Secretariat%20-%20Status%20of%20Reporting%20(28.04.2022).pdf). The number of 2021 annual reports due and submitted on time is based on the number of 2021 reports submitted as of 7 June 2022 according to the Secretariat’s website: ATT Secretariat, “Annual Reports,” <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/annual-reports.html?templateId=209826>.

## ► Reporting States Parties

Eighty-eight States Parties to the ATT have submitted at least one initial and/or annual report under the treaty. Together, these States Parties account for a significant percentage of the global trade in conventional arms. According to SIPRI estimates of the volume of international arms transfers, the 88 States Parties with ATT reporting experience accounted for 37 percent of all major weapons exports and 32 percent of all major weapons imports from 2017-2021.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, all but one of the 17 States Parties that were among the top 25 arms exporters and/or top 25 arms importers during this period have submitted their required initial reports, and all but two have submitted all their required annual reports.<sup>14</sup> The ATT reports that have been submitted to date, therefore, have the potential to provide valuable insights into a considerable portion of the world's arms transfers and the transfer control systems of many top exporters and importers.

However, exporters and importers are not fully or equitably represented among ATT States Parties, which limits the ability of reports submitted under the treaty to provide comprehensive insights into global arms trade dynamics. Sixteen of the world's top 25 exporters of major conventional weapons are States Parties to the ATT, compared to just eight of the world's top 25 importers.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, several major arms exporters and importers remain outside of the treaty, including Egypt, India, Israel, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.<sup>16</sup> These six non-States Parties alone accounted for an estimated 60 percent of all major weapons exports and 32 percent of all major weapons imports from 2017-2021, putting in perspective the significant portion of the global arms trade that remains outside the ATT.<sup>17</sup>

There are considerable regional differences in ATT reporters. States Parties in Europe represent nearly half of the States Parties that have submitted an initial report (44 percent) and a similar percentage of States Parties that have submitted at least one annual report (48 percent). States Parties in the Americas constitute 23 percent of initial reporters and 20 percent of annual reporters, followed by States Parties in Africa (17 and 15 percent), Asia (9 and 10 percent), and Oceania (6 and 6 percent). While disparities in regional reporting are due in part to varying rates of participation in the ATT across regions, these disparities are also attributable to some regions struggling to fulfill their reporting requirements.

<sup>13</sup> SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfer Database," accessed 20 May 2022, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>. The SIPRI arms trade data referenced throughout this report is an imperfect analytical tool in this context, as it does not cover the transfer of all eight categories of arms listed in ATT Article 2(1). Rather, it covers the transfers of what SIPRI terms "major weapons," which SIPRI defines as including aircraft, air defense systems, anti-submarine warfare weapons, armored vehicles, artillery, engines, missiles, sensors, satellites, and ships, and other relevant systems. With the exception of portable guided missiles and guided anti-tank missiles, the SIPRI data do not include transfers of small arms and light weapons. For more, see: SIPRI, "Sources and methods," <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/sources-and-methods>.

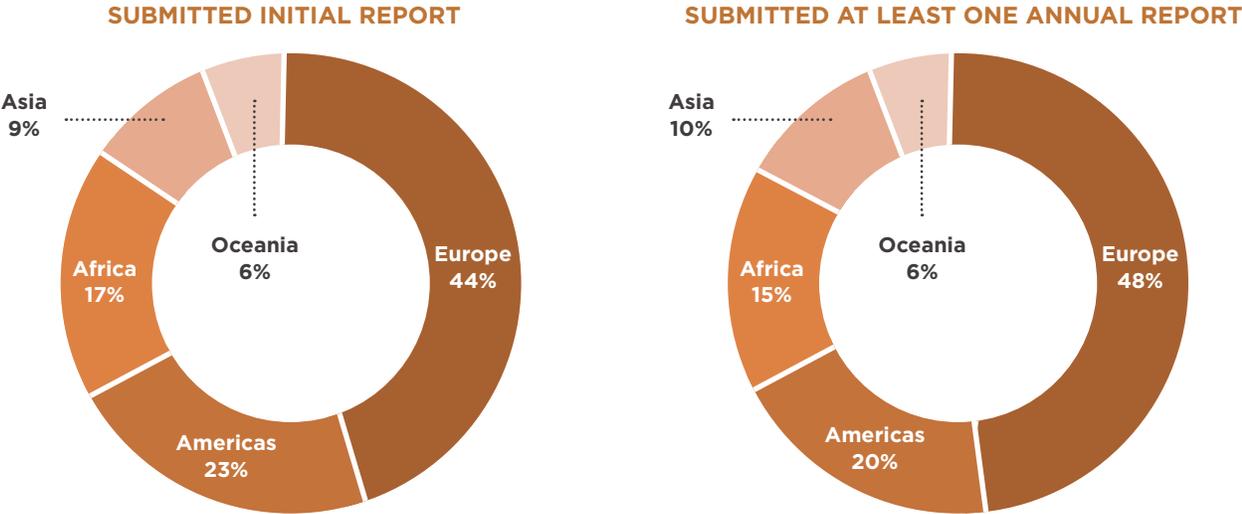
<sup>14</sup> As of 21 July 2022, Brazil – considered to be among the world's top 25 exporters of major weapons from 2017-2021, according to SIPRI estimates – has yet to submit any of its required ATT initial or annual reports, as discussed below. France – considered to be among the world's top 25 major weapons exporters during this period – has yet to submit its required ATT annual report for the 2021 calendar year. SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfer Database."

<sup>15</sup> The 16 ATT States Parties that were among SIPRI's top 25 major weapons exporters from 2017-21 are: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The eight States Parties that were among SIPRI's top 25 major weapons importers from 2017-21 are: Australia, China, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom. SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfer Database."

<sup>16</sup> Four of these six States – India, Israel, Russia, and the United States – were among the world's top 25 major weapons exporters from 2017-21 and five – Egypt, India, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United States – were among the world's top 25 major weapons importers. Two of these six States – Israel and United States – have signed the ATT, but none have ratified, accepted, or approved the treaty. SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfer Database."

<sup>17</sup> SIPRI, "SIPRI Arms Transfer Database."

**Figure 2: Regional Composition of Reporting States Parties**



► **Non-Reporting States Parties**

Twenty-four States Parties (nearly 22 percent) have thus far failed to submit their required ATT initial reports to the ATT Secretariat. Thirty-one States Parties have yet to submit an annual report, despite being required to do so for one or more years, accounting for 28 percent of all States Parties that are required to have submitted annual reports under the treaty.

In total, 33 States Parties - nearly a third of those due to report - have yet to fulfill their initial and/or annual reporting obligations under the ATT. While some of these non-reporters are only delinquent with respect to either their initial or annual reporting requirements, 22 of these 33 States Parties have submitted neither their initial report nor an annual report.

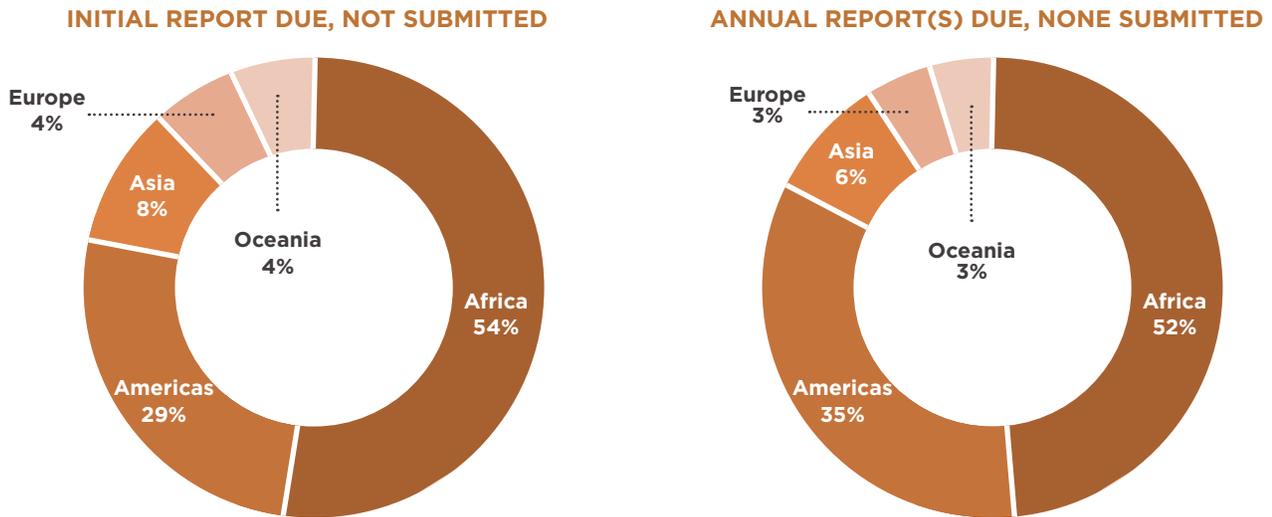
Non-reporting States Parties have tended to transfer relatively few, if any, conventional arms each year, with most accounting for just a fraction of a percent of the total volume of international arms exports and imports from 2017-2021, according to SIPRI estimates. Notable exceptions, however, are Afghanistan and Brazil; both are major arms importers, and Brazil is also a major arms exporter.

**Figure 3: States Parties Yet to Submit Required Initial and/or Annual Reports:**

<b>State Party</b> * Least developed country † Small island developing State	<b>No Initial Report Submitted</b>	<b>No Annual Report Submitted</b>	<b>Neither Initial nor Annual Report Submitted</b>
Afghanistan*			X
Bahamas†			X
Barbados†	X		
Belize†		X	
Botswana		X	
Brazil			X
Cabo Verde†			X
Central African Republic*			X
Chad*			X
Côte D'Ivoire		X	
Dominica†			X
Ghana			X
Grenada†		X	
Guinea*			X
Guinea Bissau†*			X
Guyana†			X
Lebanon			X
Lesotho*			X
Mali*	X		
Mauritania*			X
Mozambique*			X
Namibia			X
Niue†			X
Saint Kitts and Nevis†			X
Saint Lucia†			X
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines†		X	
San Marino			X
Sao Tome and Principe†*			X
Seychelles†			X
Suriname†		X	
Togo*		X	
Trinidad and Tobago†		X	
Zambia*		X	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22</b>

States Parties in Africa and the Americas represent an outsized share of non-reporters. While each of these two regions accounts for just 25 percent of the 110 States Parties due to report, the vast majority of non-reporting States Parties are in Africa or the Americas. States Parties in Africa represent 54 percent of those with overdue initial reports and 52 percent of those that have yet to submit any of their required annual reports, while States Parties in the Americas account for 29 percent of delinquent initial reporters and 35 percent of delinquent annual reporters.

**Figure 4: Regional Composition of Non-Reporting States Parties** (of those due to report)

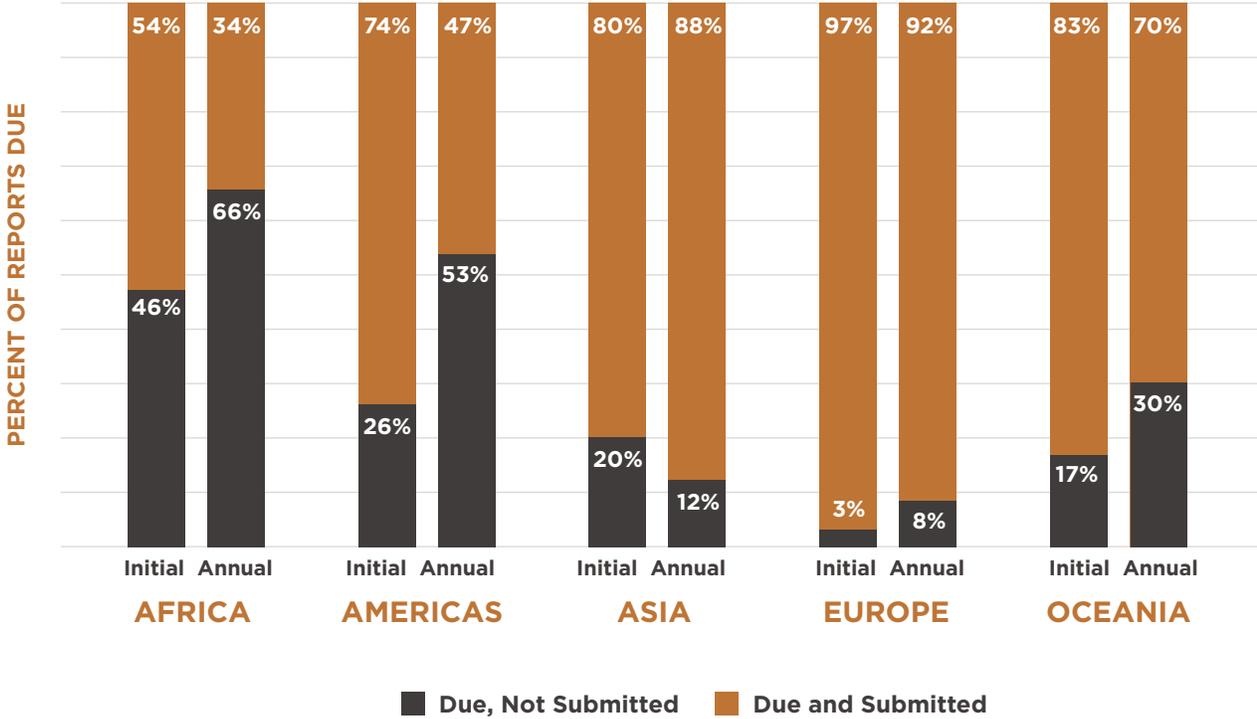


Africa and the Americas also have the highest non-reporting rates compared to other regions. Of the total number of reports due from State Parties in Africa since reporting under the ATT began, 46 percent of required initial reports and 66 percent of required annual reports have yet to be submitted. Meanwhile, 26 percent and 53 percent, respectively, of the initial and annual reports that States Parties in the Americas are required to have submitted have not yet been provided to the treaty Secretariat.



FLICKR.COM/US AIR FORCE

**Figure 5: Percent of Reports Due and Submitted by Region**



Within Africa and the Americas, there are notable sub-regional variations in reporting levels.<sup>18</sup> Rates of initial and annual reporting non-compliance among States Parties in Middle and Southern Africa, for example, are high within the region. Compared to the 46 percent of all States Parties in Africa that have not submitted an initial report, 75 percent of those in Middle Africa and 50 percent of those in Southern Africa have yet to do so. Similarly, while 57 percent of all African States Parties have yet to submit any of their required annual reports, 75 percent of States Parties in Middle and Southern Africa have not yet done so.<sup>19</sup> In the Americas, rates of reporting non-compliance are particularly high in the Caribbean sub-region. Twenty-six percent of States Parties in the Americas have yet to submit their initial report, compared to 45 percent of those in the Caribbean sub-region. Likewise, 41 percent of States Parties in the Americas region have yet to submit at least one annual report, compared to the 64 percent in the Caribbean sub-region that have not yet done so.<sup>20</sup>

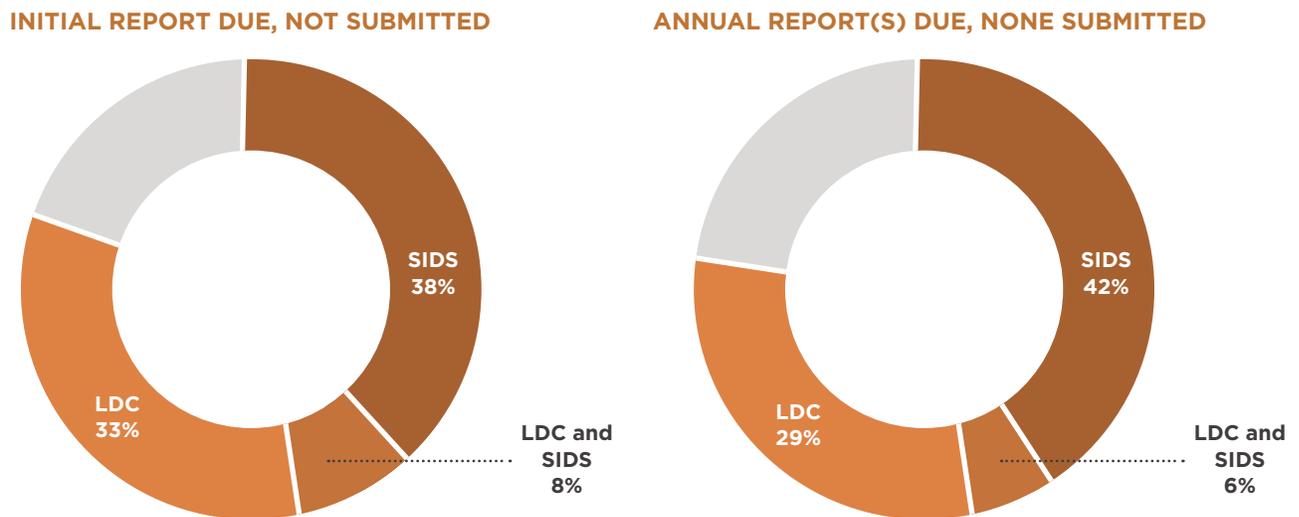
Non-reporting States Parties are predominantly those considered by United Nations classifications to be least developed countries (LDC), small island developing States (SIDS), or a combination of the two. Together, these States Parties represent a combined 79 percent of States Parties with overdue initial reports and 77 percent of those that have yet to submit any of their required annual reports.

<sup>18</sup> This report utilizes the UN Statistics Division’s regional and sub-regional country lists as well as its least developed country and small island developing State groupings. For more information, see: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, “Methodology,” <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.

<sup>19</sup> Three of the four States Parties in Middle Africa have not submitted any of their required initial or annual reports (Central African Republic, Chad, and Sao Tome and Principe). Two of the four States Parties in Southern Africa have not submitted their initial reports (Lesotho and Namibia) and three have not submitted any of their required annual reports (Botswana, Lesotho, and Namibia).

<sup>20</sup> Of the 11 States Parties in the Caribbean, five have not submitted an initial report (Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia) and seven have not submitted any of their required annual reports (Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago).

**Figure 6: Types of Non-Reporting States Parties** (of those due to report)



The vast majority of non-reporting States Parties are several years past their reporting deadlines. Of the 24 States Parties with overdue initial reports, 19 (or 79 percent) were required to have submitted their initial reports over two years ago. Seven of these 24 missing initial reporters (or 29 percent) are more than six years past their initial reporting deadline. Similarly, 22 of the 31 States Parties that have yet to submit any of their required annual reports (or 71 percent) were required to have submitted their first annual report over two years ago, including the 8 States Parties (or 26 percent) that are more than six years past their first annual reporting deadline.

Although reporting is required under the ATT, States Parties often face significant barriers to reporting. As will be discussed in more detail below, a lack of understanding, competing government priorities, limited capacity, and bureaucratic challenges can undermine national reporting efforts – particularly for small island developing States and least developed countries, which together make up the majority of non-reporters. Addressing persistent reporting compliance issues will require increased prioritization of reporting requirements and more readily available assistance to overcome reporting challenges.

### **PRIVATE REPORTING**

The ATT requires that initial and annual reports “shall be made available, and distributed to States Parties by the Secretariat.” When submitting reports to the ATT Secretariat, States Parties may indicate if they wish to make their reports publicly available, in which case they are posted publicly on the Secretariat’s website. Private reports are posted on a restricted section of the Secretariat’s website.

Private reports represent a significant and growing percentage of both initial and annual reports. Twenty-One States Parties have made their ATT initial reports private, representing nearly a quarter of the 86 States Parties that have submitted an initial report. Thirty-three of the 79 States Parties with annual reporting experience (or 42 percent) have restricted public access to at least one of their annual reports. Twelve of these States Parties have only ever submitted private annual reports, while the remaining 21 have submitted a combination of public and private annual reports over the last seven years. In total, 81 of the 423 annual reports that have been submitted to date (or 19 percent) are private.

There has been a marked increase in the submission of private initial and annual reports over the first seven years of ATT reporting. None of the first 25 initial reports submitted were private. By contrast, 16 of the 25 most recently submitted initial reports (or 64 percent) were private. Similarly, private annual reports have gone from representing 4 percent of reports submitted for 2015 arms exports and imports to a record-high 33 percent of reports submitted for the 2021 calendar year. This increase in private annual reporting is due not only to first-time reporters submitting private reports but also to States Parties that have shifted from public to private reporting. At least eight States Parties – El Salvador, Georgia, Greece, Liberia, Lithuania, Mauritius, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Senegal – appear to have shifted towards private annual reporting; all eight first reported publicly but have exclusively submitted private annual reports in their two most recent submissions.<sup>21</sup> Even some long-standing public reporters are now electing to report privately. Among the 2021 annual reports, four States Parties that submitted public annual reports for each of their first six years of reporting – Croatia, Latvia, Portugal, and Spain – elected to restrict public access to their 2021 reports.

**Figure 7: Shifts from Public to Private Annual Reporting**

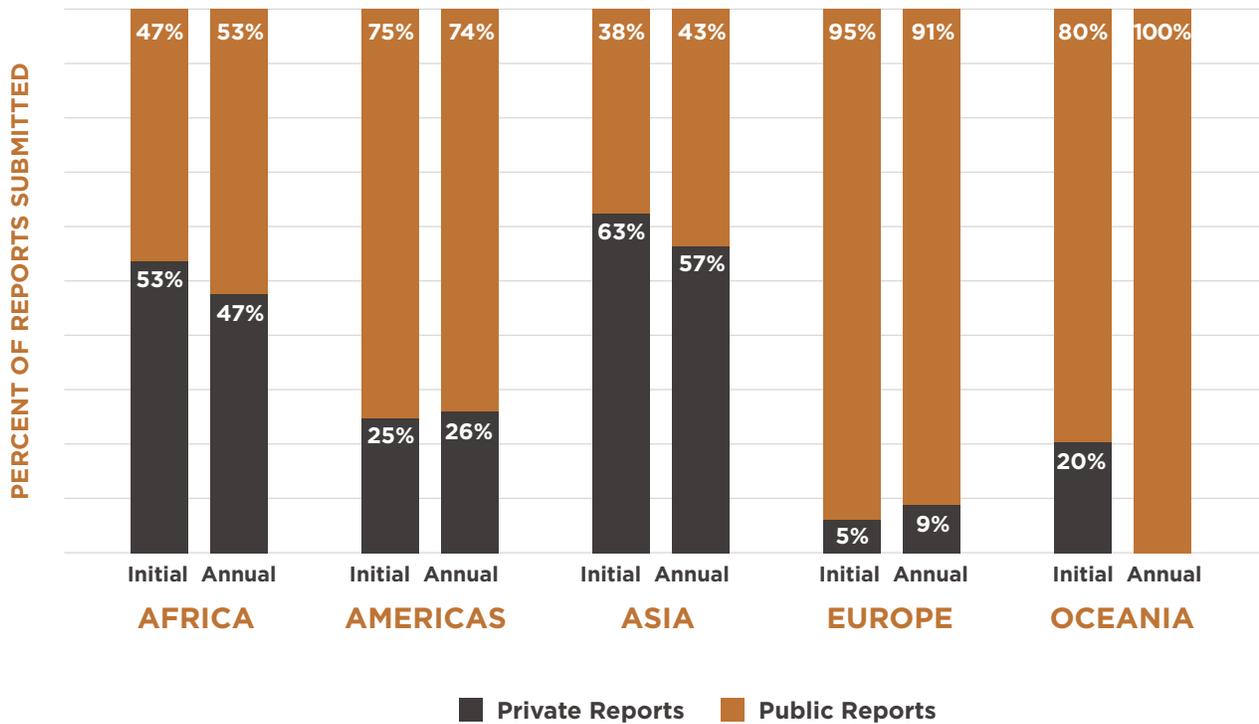
State Party	Reporting Year						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
El Salvador	Public	Public	Public	Public	Public	Private	Private
Georgia	No report due	No report due	Public	Private	Private	Private	Private
Greece	No report due	Public	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private
Liberia	Public	Private	No report submitted	Private	No report submitted	No report submitted	No report submitted
Lithuania	Public	Public	Public	Private	Private	Private	Private
Mauritius	No report due	Public	Public	Private	Private	Private	Private
Republic of North Macedonia	Public	Public	Public	Public	Private	Private	No report submitted
Senegal	Public	Private	Public	Private	Private	Private	Private

Public report
  Private report
  No report submitted
  No report due

Regionally, Asia maintains the highest rate of private reporting, with private reports representing 63 percent of initial reports and 57 percent of annual reports submitted by States Parties in the region, followed by Africa, where private initial and annual reporting rates are 53 percent and 47 percent, respectively. By comparison, 25 percent of initial reports and 26 percent of annual reports submitted by States Parties in the Americas and 5 and 9 percent, respectively, of initial and annual reports submitted by States Parties in Europe are private. States Parties in Oceania have only ever submitted public annual reports, though 20 percent of initial reports submitted by States Parties in the region are private.

<sup>21</sup> For purposes of this report, the eight States Parties that appear to have shifted towards private annual reporting are those whose first annual reports are public but whose most recent two annual reports are private.

**Figure 8: Public vs. Private Reporting Rates by Region**



States Parties may restrict access to their initial and annual reports for a variety of reasons. In response to a survey conducted by Stimson and SIPRI, States Parties with private initial or annual reporting experience cited concerns around the release of potentially sensitive information, uncertainties around public reporting, and international legal obligations outside the ATT as reasons for electing to submit private initial or annual reports.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, three States Parties that participated in the survey explained that public access to their reports was restricted by mistake. Two of these States Parties indicated that they checked the wrong box when preparing their reports and were able to rectify the issue by submitting amended reports to the ATT Secretariat. The third State Party explained that they were not aware their report was private until Stimson researchers asked them about it, but that they have since taken steps to address the issue. However, the report in question is still not publicly available on the Secretariat’s website at the time of writing.

### TRANSPARENCY ISSUES

Although ATT reporting has been in place for seven years, current reporting practices have limited the utility of initial and annual reports. Reports often suffer from a lack of a standard approach to reporting, the prevalence of outdated or incorrect information, reports that contain less information than those submitted under other frameworks, and decisions to withhold or aggregate key information.

<sup>22</sup> Stimson Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project, *Taking Stock of ATT Reporting Trends and Challenges*, pp. 13-15.

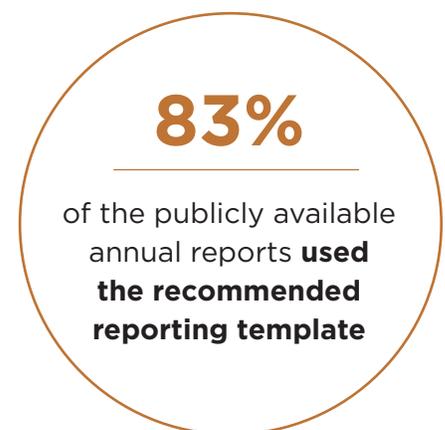
## ► Lack of a Standard Approach to Reporting

Over the first seven years of ATT reporting the utility of initial and annual reports has been limited by the lack of a standardized approach to reporting. The ATT does not require States Parties to develop or adopt standardized initial or annual report formats, and States Parties may therefore submit their reports in whatever form they choose. Similarly, while the treaty broadly outlines the types of information States Parties are required to include in their reports, States Parties may make different determinations around whether and how to include certain information in their reports.

The lack of a standardized approach to reporting under the ATT undermines comprehensive reporting analysis. Standardizing the format and content of reports has a number of practical benefits and can assist States Parties in understanding the types of information required for comprehensive reporting, simplifying their processes for preparing reports, and more efficiently fulfilling their reporting obligations. Standardized reporting also makes it easier to identify trends, which can deepen understandings of challenges and good practices; facilitate assessments of progress made; and assist in identifying opportunities to strengthen treaty implementation.

Notable efforts have been made to standardize the format and content of ATT initial and annual reports. Following the treaty's adoption, an informal working group on reporting developed standardized initial and annual reporting templates, which has helped promote consistency both in the format and types of information provided in ATT reports. These reporting templates were endorsed and recommended for use at the Second Conference of States Parties to the ATT (CSP2) and revised versions were again endorsed and recommended by CSP7. The ATT Secretariat has also developed an online tool that States Parties may use to prepare their initial and annual reports that integrates the recommended reporting templates. Additionally, the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting's 'FAQ'-type guidance document for completing the annual report as well as the annual reporting template itself both recommend that a State Party's choices around whether to report authorized or actual transfers and whether to do so in terms of quantity or value "remain stable over time [...] for reasons of consistency and continuity."<sup>23</sup>

In practice, States Parties have used a variety of formats to prepare their ATT initial and annual reports. Of the 86 initial reports submitted to date, 73 (or 85 percent) used the recommended reporting template, according to the ATT Secretariat.<sup>24</sup> Of those that are publicly available, seven used the ATT Baseline Assessment Survey developed by the Stimson Center's Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project (ATT-BAP) and two used a national format. Meanwhile, of the 342 publicly available annual reports, 284 (or 83 percent) used the recommended reporting template, 40 (or 12 percent) used the online reporting tool, and 18 (or 5 percent) used either a UNROCA report or a modified version of it. While States Parties have tended to use the same annual report format from year to year, six have oscillated between the reporting template and online tool, three have oscillated between the reporting template and versions of their UNROCA reports, and one has oscillated between the reporting template, online tool, and UNROCA reports.<sup>25</sup>



<sup>23</sup> Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, "Reporting Authorized or Actual Exports and Imports of Conventional Arms under the ATT," 26 July 2019, p. 12, [https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT\\_CSP5\\_WGTR\\_Guide%20to%20Reporting%20\(Annex%20B%20to%20WGTR%20Report%20to%20CSP5\)/ATT\\_CSP5\\_WGTR\\_Guide%20to%20Reporting%20\(Annex%20B%20to%20WGTR%20Report%20to%20CSP5\).pdf?templateId=1280266](https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_CSP5_WGTR_Guide%20to%20Reporting%20(Annex%20B%20to%20WGTR%20Report%20to%20CSP5)/ATT_CSP5_WGTR_Guide%20to%20Reporting%20(Annex%20B%20to%20WGTR%20Report%20to%20CSP5).pdf?templateId=1280266).

<sup>24</sup> ATT Secretariat, "Arms Trade Treaty: Status of Reporting."

<sup>25</sup> Argentina, Belgium, Hungary, Japan, Luxembourg, and Norway have oscillated between using the reporting template and online tool to submit their annual reports; Australia, Burkina Faso, and the United Kingdom have oscillated between the reporting template and versions of their UNROCA reports; and the Netherlands has oscillated between the reporting template, online tool, and UNROCA reports.



FLICKR.COM/UNMISS

There are also substantive differences in how States Parties have approached reporting under the treaty, particularly with respect to annual reports. Annual reports submitted by different States Parties or by the same State Party for different years may vary in terms of whether they reflect actual and/or authorized transfers and whether they include the number and/or value of items transferred. Additionally, States Parties may lack a standardized approach to compiling transfer data from year to year. For example, one State Party explained that officials responsible for preparing its annual reports have not been consistent in whether and how authorized transfers of SALW parts and components are reflected in their reports.

States Parties may, consistent with their obligations under the ATT, adopt different approaches to fulfilling their reporting obligations under the treaty. Moreover, it is unrealistic to expect that State Parties would adopt identical approaches to reporting or that these approaches would remain unchanged from year to year given the various and sometimes evolving preferences and record-keeping practices of the ATT's 111 States Parties. However, the lack of a standardized approach to formatting reports and preparing reporting information can complicate comparisons between reports, thereby limiting the insights that reports are able to provide.

### ► **Outdated or Incorrect Information**

Reporting under the ATT has been undermined by States Parties failing to update outdated or incorrect information in their previously submitted reports. Without complete information, it is impossible to maintain comprehensive and precise analyses of treaty implementation and arms trade dynamics or build global trust and confidence. Only six States Parties have submitted updates to their ATT initial reports, despite several additional States Parties indicating that changes have subsequently been made to their national control systems. As a result, it is likely that many initial reports contain outdated information on States Parties' control measures and treaty implementation. Reports may also contain inaccurate information that has yet to be corrected. For example, an official of one State Party acknowledged in an interview with Stimson researchers that, due to uncertainties around how to easily and discreetly update their annual reports, they had yet to correct one of their government's previous annual reports that mistakenly includes information on an export that never took place involving particularly sensitive weapons (man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS) that the State Party does not even produce.<sup>26</sup>

The presence of outdated or incorrect information in initial or annual reports poses obvious challenges. In the short term, outdated or incorrect information can result in inaccurate or incomplete assessments of States Parties' arms transfers and control systems as well as of the treaty's overall impact. In the long term, these deficiencies risk eroding confidence in the treaty's reporting framework and devaluing the importance of comprehensive and accurate report submissions.

<sup>26</sup> Stimson Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project, *Taking Stock of ATT Reporting Trends and Challenges*, p. 22.

## ► Providing Less Detail Than in Other Reports

States Parties often provide less information in their ATT reports than they do in reports submitted under other frameworks. Differing levels of information can stem from differences between the ATT reporting templates and those used by other reporting mechanisms. For example, the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA) report form includes more detailed and explicit questions related to risk mitigation measures, brokering controls, and assistance needs compared to previous versions of the ATT initial reporting template. As a result, States have often provided more detailed and useful responses on these elements of their transfer control systems in their PoA reports than in their ATT initial reports. The revised initial reporting template endorsed and recommended for use by CSP7 has the potential to close some of these gaps by inviting States Parties to respond to additional and more explicit questions. However, it remains to be seen what impact these revisions will have, particularly since the bulk of initial reports submitted to date utilized previous versions of the initial reporting template.

ATT reporting can and should provide unique insights into international arms transfers and national transfer control systems in order to meaningfully advance arms trade transparency, demonstrate the ATT's unique potential, and build momentum around the treaty's universalization and effective implementation. The relative lack of information in some States Parties' ATT reports is also related to challenges and missed opportunities around reporting synergies. Many States Parties already report on their arms transfers and national control systems under existing national, regional, or international frameworks, which can be quite time- and resource-intensive. Given the competing reporting requirements and deadlines they face, officials responsible for preparing these reports may lack the capacity or will to report comprehensively under the ATT. Relatedly, they may not understand how best to leverage reporting synergies, such as overlapping reporting requirements, to avoid duplicative work, streamline processes and practices, and minimize reporting burdens.

## ► Withholding and Aggregating Information

Decisions to withhold or aggregate annual reporting information represent an additional transparency challenge. Every year since annual reporting began in 2016, States Parties have submitted annual reports with information withheld or otherwise omitted, often without explanation. The ATT explicitly allows States Parties to “exclude commercially sensitive or national security information” from their reports. While many States Parties have indicated that such information was withheld from their annual reports by checking the relevant box in the annual report template, and at times have written “classified” or “withheld” under certain sections of their report to indicate the types of information withheld, many have also omitted information without explanation. Examples of information that States Parties have omitted from their annual reports include the number or value of weapons imported or exported, the importing or exporting State, and whether the information contained within the report reflects actual or authorized transfers. In some cases, States Parties have omitted certain exports or imports from their annual reports. Some of these transfers have only come to light through industry disclosures, media investigations, or other means.

During each of the past seven years of ATT annual reporting, States Parties have also aggregated reporting data in ways that prevent detailed analyses of arms exports and imports. Some States Parties report the aggregate number or value of a given category of weapon exported to or imported from a group of States, without indicating the number or value that was transferred to or from each State – a practice that is particularly common with respect to SALW transfers. Some States Parties report only on their SALW transfers in aggregate, without utilizing the reporting template's sub-categories of SALW to indicate the specific type of weapon that was imported or exported.

These practices serve to undermine the ATT's contributions to arms trade transparency. When annual reporting data is withheld or aggregated to the point that it becomes impossible to determine how much of a given item was transferred to or from a given State, it is exceedingly difficult to develop a comprehensive and accurate understanding of global weapons flows.

## REPORTING METHODS, EXPERIENCES, AND CHALLENGES

States Parties have developed a variety of processes and practices to fulfill their reporting obligations under the ATT, identified a host of challenges to consistent and transparent reporting, and shared valuable insights on good practices for effective reporting in the first seven years of ATT reporting. This section provides an overview of the reporting methods, experiences, and challenges that current and prospective ATT States Parties shared with Stimson and SIPRI researchers in response to a recent survey.

### REPORTING PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

Nearly all of the 34 States Parties that responded to the Stimson/SIPRI survey have designated one or more ministries or agencies as responsible for preparing and contributing to their ATT reports. In most cases, responsibility for preparing ATT reports rests with a single ministry or agency, while multiple ministries or agencies are responsible for contributing to report preparation by providing necessary information on a State Party's arms transfers and transfer control system. States Parties identified a range of authorities involved in ATT reporting. However, Ministries of Foreign Affairs were the most commonly cited authorities for preparing ATT reports and Ministries of Defense were the most commonly cited authorities for contributing to them.

Most States Parties indicated that they "utilize an existing inter-agency process or coordination mechanism" to prepare their reports. Several States Parties offered examples of good practice for coordinating reporting efforts, including the use of consolidated datasets, legal requirements around the provision of reporting data, and reporting matrices. In many cases, respondents explained that these processes or mechanisms are not formalized but have nonetheless proved effective. Given the significant coordination challenges States Parties may face when preparing their reports, implementing coordination processes or mechanisms are an essential component of effective reporting.

While most States Parties confirmed that they have procedures in place to update information in their initial reports, several respondents explained that these procedures were not formalized. Additionally, several States Parties acknowledged that they have not updated their initial reports, despite making changes to their national control systems, due to capacity or resource constraints or uncertainties surrounding how to do so. States Parties may also interpret the scope of their obligation to update their initial reports in different ways. One State Party explained that it "is aware of the obligation to update its initial report when important changes are made to the national control system," which may suggest that it does not interpret the ATT as requiring it to provide updates on relatively minor changes to its national control system. Another State Party explained that it has not updated its initial report because there have not been any new regulations on a "national or EU-level," which may suggest that it considers there to be a requirement for States Parties to report on changes to their regional, as well as national, control systems.

In their survey responses, States Parties also shared insights on their experiences leveraging synergies between the ATT and other national, regional, and international reporting frameworks to streamline reporting under the treaty. Many respondents described how using the same information, processes, or reports to report on arms transfers or transfer control systems under multiple frameworks can be effective strategies for minimizing ATT reporting burdens. At the same time, States Parties noted that they may be limited in their ability to utilize the same reporting data to prepare reports under multiple frameworks.

## **REPORTING CHALLENGES**

Many States Parties continue to face obstacles to fulfilling their ATT reporting requirements despite efforts to minimize the challenges posed by reporting under the treaty. Of the 34 States Parties that responded to the survey Stimson and SIPRI conducted, nearly two-thirds have experienced ATT reporting challenges. In their responses, States Parties described facing cross-cutting challenges that have negatively impacted the preparation of both their initial and annual reports as well as challenges specific to either initial or annual reporting. In analyzing the responses provided, Stimson researchers have identified four main types of ATT reporting challenges.

1

### **AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF ATT OBLIGATIONS**

**in which States have expressed uncertainties about what, how, and when to report.**

- ▶ Uncertainty/confusion regarding reporting requirements, deadlines, and the distinction between public reporting, private reporting, and the exclusion of information from reports
- ▶ Uncertainty in how to collect relevant information in ways that align with reporting deadlines
- ▶ Confusion arising from reporting templates/the online reporting tool
- ▶ Uncertainty about when States Parties are required to submit updates to the ATT Secretariat, and how they can do so

2

### **CAPACITY AND RESOURCE CHALLENGES**

**in which States have described the negative impact of limited time, personnel, and/or information management systems on their reporting efforts.**

- ▶ Limited capacity and resources
- ▶ Limited availability of relevant information
- ▶ Lack of national point(s) of contact
- ▶ Lack of time to complete report(s)
- ▶ Underdeveloped/lack of internal systems to collect, compile, and store relevant information

3

### **INTERNAL AND BUREAUCRATIC CHALLENGES**

**in which States have noted the obstacles posed by poor coordination across government offices or agencies as well as complications accessing, compiling, and assessing relevant information.**

- ▶ Poor coordination between government agencies or lack of interagency process to facilitate report completion
- ▶ Difficulty accessing and compiling relevant information
- ▶ Difficulty conducting assessments of a national transfer control system
- ▶ Difficulty preparing statistical data for ATT annual reports

4

### **POLITICAL/SECURITY CHALLENGES**

**in which States' reporting efforts are hampered by concerns or a lack of understanding related to what information is shared and with whom as well as competing government priorities.**

- ▶ Confidentiality concerns
- ▶ Concerns related to the release of information regarded as sensitive
- ▶ Reporting fatigue
- ▶ Political interference



---

**FIRST** is a lack of awareness and understanding of ATT obligations, including uncertainties about what, how, and when to report, which poses obvious challenges to fulfilling the treaty’s reporting requirements. Survey respondents have expressed confusion or uncertainty around reporting requirements and deadlines; the distinction between public and private reporting; processes for collecting information and submitting updates to the ATT Secretariat; and, in some cases, a lack of awareness of their own government’s reporting practices. For example, due to confusion around reporting obligations, States Parties that do not have any transfers to report may mistakenly believe they are not required to submit an annual report, when in fact they are still required to submit a “nil” report. A potential solution to this latter challenge could be turning the “nil” report form, which is contained at the end of the annual reporting template, into a standalone form.

---



**SECOND**, many States Parties have described facing capacity and resource challenges. This may include staff shortages or personnel changes, a lack of technical capacity around record-keeping and information sharing, and a lack of time to prepare or update reports. Capacity and resource-related challenges appear to pose a particular challenge with respect to annual reporting—a lack of capacity or personnel was the second most commonly cited annual reporting challenge by States Parties that responded to Stimson and SIPRI’s survey. Indeed, these challenges may be even more widespread than the survey suggests, as least developed countries were underrepresented among survey respondents.<sup>27</sup>

---



**THIRD** are internal and bureaucratic challenges to reporting. Many States Parties struggle with coordination and information sharing; this was the single most commonly cited reporting challenge among the survey respondents, both with respect to initial and annual reporting. For many States Parties, the information needed to prepare initial or annual reports is spread across multiple government entities – and in some cases, private companies, such as licensed arms exporters and importers – which can make coordinating reporting efforts and sharing information particularly difficult. Many States Parties have also faced difficulties accessing, compiling, and assessing relevant information, and some have described how report submissions have been delayed due to a lack of clarity around reporting responsibilities or requirements that reports receive multiple levels of sign-off before they can be submitted.

---



**FOURTH**, States Parties have described the negative impacts that political and security challenges have had on their reporting efforts. States Parties have explained how political, economic, or security crises have reduced their reporting capacities and resulted in compliance with the ATT’s reporting requirements being seen as a lower-priority issue. In addition, States Parties have described how reporting has been complicated by questions or concerns around the release of potentially sensitive information. States Parties that submit reports under multiple reporting frameworks have also explained that it can be challenging to prioritize ATT reporting and keep track of various reporting deadlines.

---

<sup>27</sup> Least developed countries represented 3 (or 9 percent) of the 35 survey respondents compared to 20 (or 18 percent) of all 111 States Parties. Stimson Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project, *Taking Stock of ATT Reporting Trends and Challenges*, pp. 3-4.

## ASSESSING THE ATT'S IMPACT ON TRANSPARENCY

Promoting transparency in the international arms trade is a central and explicit aim of the ATT. As we approach the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the treaty's adoption, it is an opportune time to reflect on the first seven years of reporting under the ATT and to consider whether the treaty's transparency objectives are being fulfilled. Drawing on ATT reporting trends, experiences, and challenges identified in the preceding sections, this section provides a comparative analysis of various reporting frameworks to assess the ATT's unique contributions towards promoting arms trade transparency.

In many ways, the ATT and the processes it developed have made important normative and practical contributions to advance transparency in the global arms trade. The ATT is the first and only global instrument under which States Parties have an international legal obligation to report on their arms transfers and national transfer control systems. Since the ATT's adoption in 2013, the treaty has enjoyed widespread and growing support. Today, 111 States have joined the treaty, thereby committing to mandatory reporting and the promotion of arms trade transparency. This represents a significant normative development.

In a more practical sense, the ATT has galvanized international efforts and attention around transparency and reporting and provided additional forums for the global community to discuss these issues. ATT CSP processes have provided valuable opportunities for States, the Secretariat, Working Groups, civil society, and other stakeholders to discuss and share perspectives on reporting trends, experiences, challenges, and good practices.

However, the lack of universal, consistent, and timely reporting under the ATT continues to pose significant challenges. Limited and late reporting prevents full and timely assessments of arms trade dynamics and national control measures, thereby undermining efforts to assist States Parties in identifying potential gaps, good practice, and assistance needs and capabilities. Moreover, by failing to submit their required reports or submitting reports after the deadline has passed, States Parties not only fail to uphold their legal obligations but also risk normalizing further non-compliance by other States Parties and undermining the ATT as a whole.

The ATT's transparency contributions have also been significantly undermined by the submission of private reports, especially when viewed alongside PoA and UNROCA report submissions. All reports submitted under the PoA and UNROCA are publicly available. By contrast, only 76 percent of initial reports and 81 percent of annual reports are publicly available, with the remainder accessible only to the ATT Secretariat and other States Parties. The rate of private initial and annual reporting has steadily increased over the years, undermining the norm of transparency.

The ATT has had mixed success in expanding global reporting levels above those resulting from pre-ATT reporting frameworks. Since initial reporting under the ATT began in 2015, more States have provided insights on their transfer control systems in reports to the PoA than in initial reports under the ATT. During this period, 143 States submitted at least one PoA report compared to the 86 States Parties that have submitted an ATT initial report. However, in terms of reporting rates, ATT initial reporting has had a slight advantage. While 74 percent of the 193 UN Member States submitted a PoA report since 2015, 78 percent of the 110 States Parties due to submit an initial report have done so. It is curious, though, that even among the States Parties required to submit an initial report, a greater number have reported under the PoA since 2015 (90 States Parties) than have fulfilled their initial reporting obligation under the ATT

(86 States Parties). This includes seven States Parties that submitted at least one PoA report in the years since their initial report was due, but which still have not submitted their initial report.<sup>28</sup>

By contrast, ATT annual report submissions have consistently outpaced UNROCA report submissions. Since ATT annual reporting began in 2016 covering 2015 arms transfers, 79 States Parties have submitted at least one annual report, compared to 68 States that submitted one or more UNROCA reports during the same period. Furthermore, the number of annual reports submitted under the ATT has exceeded the number of reports submitted to UNROCA for each reporting year.

**Figure 9: UNROCA and ATT Annual Report Submissions Over Time**

Report Year	UNROCA Reports	ATT Annual Reports
2015	42	54
2016	39	57
2017	47	61
2018	44	66
2019	40	67
2020	39	64
2021	35	54

The ATT has made notable, though modest, progress in prompting States that have never reported on their national control systems or arms transfers under the PoA or UNROCA to submit initial or annual reports to the ATT Secretariat. Nearly all of the 86 States Parties that have submitted an initial report also have experience reporting under the PoA, just as most of the 79 States Parties with annual reporting experience have submitted one or more UNROCA reports. However, three of the States Parties that have submitted an ATT initial report (Palau, the State of Palestine, and Tuvalu) have never reported to the PoA. Likewise, three States Parties with annual reporting experience (Liberia, Nigeria, and the State of Palestine) have never reported to the UNROCA.

With respect to the content of the reports themselves, ATT reports do not necessarily represent a significant improvement over PoA or UNROCA reports. ATT initial reports often elicit information on a wider range of national control measures compared to PoA reports given the PoA’s focus on regulating SALW as opposed to conventional arms more generally. However, because States are also asked more detailed questions in their PoA reports than in their ATT initial reports, their PoA reports often contain more detailed and useful responses. This dynamic may change as more States Parties use the revised initial reporting template to submit new or updated reports.

Additionally, since only six States Parties have updated their initial reports, it is likely that many initial reports contain outdated information. PoA reports may be more up-to-date, as States are encouraged to submit reports every two years (although they may report the same information each year). The types of arms transfer information provided in ATT annual reports is often similar to information provided in UNROCA reports, with several notable exceptions. Because States Parties are required to report on SALW transfers in their ATT annual reports – and only encouraged to do so in their UNROCA reports – many SALW transfers captured in ATT reports are not reflected in the corresponding UNROCA reports. Conversely, because States are invited to provide a greater variety of information in their UNROCA reports than they are required to provide in their ATT annual reports – including on their military holdings, procurement, and relevant laws and policies – UNROCA reports typically contain more types of information than ATT annual reports.

Although ATT reporting has yet to live up to its full potential, significant progress has been made to

<sup>28</sup> The seven States Parties that submitted at least one PoA report in the years since their initial report was due, but still have not submitted their initial report, are: Mali, Guinea, Mauritania, Central African Republic, Ghana, Lesotho, and Cabo Verde.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

strengthen reporting and enhance the treaty's transparency contributions. Furthermore, there are a number of steps that States, the Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, the treaty Secretariat, and others can take to build momentum around ATT reporting, enhance national reporting capacities, and more fully realize the benefits these reports can provide.

### **States Parties should:**

- ▶ Ensure that systems are in place to facilitate effective intragovernmental coordination – including points of contact, interagency coordination mechanisms, and an interagency submission calendar.
- ▶ Employ robust record-keeping and database management systems and practices for streamlined information sharing.
- ▶ Identify and leverage synergies across reporting frameworks to ease ATT reporting burdens.
- ▶ Periodically review previously submitted reports to ensure that they are accurate, up-to-date, and properly classified as public vs. private. If States Parties detect any discrepancies, outdated information, or private reports that they wish to make public, they should notify the Secretariat and submit an updated report.
- ▶ Use the upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ATT's adoption as an opportunity to renew the commitment to the treaty's transparency aims by submitting any overdue reports and updating their initial reports if necessary.
- ▶ Encourage reporting States Parties to share reporting good practices and lessons learned with States Parties with little or no reporting experience, including in WGTR meetings or through peer-to-peer exchanges. States Parties with strong reporting records should take on a larger leadership role in providing reporting assistance, with particular attention to small island developing States or least developed countries. Moreover, those States Parties with a strong record of ATT reporting can share how they overcame reporting challenges.

### **The Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, ATT Secretariat, CSP chair, and other stakeholders should:**

- ▶ Undertake coordinated outreach with non-reporting States Parties as well as with those that have shifted from public to private reporting. This outreach should seek to investigate and identify obstacles to consistent, transparent reporting and implement targeted and tangible solutions and should include communications sent from each CSP chair to States Parties that have not submitted all of their required reports requesting them to do so and directing them to assistance, if necessary.
- ▶ Monitor reporting patterns and experiences to evaluate the use and impact of the revised recommended reporting templates.

- ▶ Develop and support peer review processes for initial and annual reports. Such processes could entail a review of initial and annual reports by a group of designated government experts. With input and review by States Parties, these experts could create verified reports on treaty implementation and arms transfers.
- ▶ Support the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, public, and searchable database of initial and annual report responses to enhance efforts to analyze arms flows and identify gaps and trends in treaty implementation.
- ▶ Enhance current ATT reporting records by providing additional information on submission dates, on-time submissions, submissions by region, and clear and easy-to-find notifications on which States Parties have updated their initial reports
- ▶ Highlight reporting practices that undermine the treaty’s transparency contributions – including the aggregation of transfer data – and work with States Parties to operationalize reporting recommendations and good practice – including around leveraging synergies to streamline reporting efforts.

The proposed mandate of the WGTR for the 2022-2023 work period outlines several measures to assist States Parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations and ensure transparency in the global arms trade.<sup>29</sup> As part of the WGTR’s efforts to better understand the state of play of compliance with reporting obligations and challenges concerning reporting – including by reviewing the status of reporting, encouraging non-compliant States to report, and utilizing the “Outreach Strategy on Reporting” to support bilateral and regional assistance with reporting – clear metrics and evaluative tools should be developed to make the WGTR’s work on reporting more tangible. These metrics could include: whether reporting is increasing among States Parties that had previously submitted none or few reports, among States Parties that received reporting-related implementation assistance or participated in a peer-to-peer exchange on reporting, or among those that received reporting reminders from CSP presidents; whether the use of the revised annual reporting template increases; whether decreasing compliance rates and increasing private reporting rates slow or reverse; and whether States Parties that typically report privately switch to public reporting.

The WGTR can also start to identify concrete steps to address substantive issues concerning reporting. In particular, it can identify good practices for addressing issues around the public availability of annual and initial reports, gender considerations in both assembly of and inclusion of information, synergies with other international instruments, and the aggregation of data. This information could be considered for inclusion in the “FAQ’-type guidance document” that the WGTR previously developed to assist States Parties in completing their ATT annual reports.<sup>30</sup>

To support transparency efforts, the WGTR could identify concrete measures to facilitate information exchange, evaluate the current utility and functionality of existing mechanisms, and identify potential improvements to currently available systems and platforms. Further, the WGTR could encourage examination of the feasibility of a searchable database for both initial and annual reports.

<sup>29</sup> Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, “Draft Annotated Agenda for Meeting of 28 April 2022,” Annex B, 13 April 2022, [https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT%20WGTR%20-%20Draft%20annotated%20agenda%20for%2028%20April%202022%20\(with%20Annexes\)/ATT%20WGTR%20-%20Draft%20annotated%20agenda%20for%2028%20April%202022%20\(with%20Annexes\).pdf](https://thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT%20WGTR%20-%20Draft%20annotated%20agenda%20for%2028%20April%202022%20(with%20Annexes)/ATT%20WGTR%20-%20Draft%20annotated%20agenda%20for%2028%20April%202022%20(with%20Annexes).pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Working Group on Transparency and Reporting, “Reporting Authorized or Actual Exports and Imports of Conventional Arms under the ATT.”



163

ACICR B AG  
251164  
001 - 011

ACICR B AG  
251 164  
012 - 033

ACICR B AG  
251 164  
034 - 045

ACICR B AG  
251166  
001 - 005

ACICR B AG  
251 166  
006 - 023

ACICR B AG  
251 166  
024 - 038

ACICR B AG  
251 169

ACICR B AG  
51225  
005

ACICR B AG  
251225  
006

ACICR B AG  
251225  
007

ACICR B AG  
251 225  
008 - 010

ACICR B AG  
251 225

ACICR B AG  
251227  
001 - 009

ACICR B AG  
251227  
010 - 011

ACICR B AG  
251 227

ACICR B AG  
251172  
001 - 004

ACICR B AG  
251 172  
005 - 015

ACICR B AG  
251173  
001 - 017

ACICR B AG  
251173  
018 - 026

ACICR B AG  
251 173  
027 - 039

ACICR B AG  
251 173  
040 - 052

ACICR B AG  
251 173  
053 - 068

ACICR B AG  
251229  
01 - 003

ACICR B AG  
251229  
4 - 006

ACICR B AG  
251229  
007 - 010

ACICR B AG  
251229  
011 - 012

ACICR B AG  
251229  
014 - 015

ACICR B AG  
251229  
016 - 018

ACICR B AG  
251229  
019 - 020

ACICR B AG  
251229  
021

ACICR B AG  
251229

ACICR B AG  
251229

ACICR B AG  
251229

ACICR B AG  
251229



ARMSTRADE.INFO

STIMSON

Since its inception, the Stimson Center's Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project has been generously funded by the Governments of Australia, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, as well as UNSCAR (the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation). In addition, the project has engaged in partnerships with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centers, regional organizations (including CARICOM and the European Union), and civil society organizations, including the Center for Armed Violence Reduction (CAVR), Control Arms, and the ATT Monitor.

For more information, visit the Arms Trade Treaty-Baseline Assessment Project Portal at [www.armstrade.info](http://www.armstrade.info) or contact us at [ATT@stimson.org](mailto:ATT@stimson.org).

Rachel Stohl: [rstohl@stimson.org](mailto:rstohl@stimson.org)

©2022 ATT-Baseline Assessment Project. All rights reserved.  
Produced by Masters Group Design

