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Académie de droit international
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WILPF
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL
LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM



QUNO
Quaker United Nations Office

PUBLIC EVENT

ADDRESSING COMPLIANCE GAPS IN ARMS TRANSFERS IS THE ARMS TRADE ABOVE INTERNATIONAL LAW?

VILLA MOYNIER, 120B RUE DE LAUSANNE, GENEVA | 20 MAY 2025, 18:30-20:00



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Global military expenditure, already on an upward trajectory prior to 2025, is now experiencing a significant surge — heightening concerns over a potential renewed global arms race. This escalation is taking place amidst persistent and systemic compliance gaps across the arms industry, implicating both State and corporate actors.

As outlined in the most recent report (A/HRC/58/41) of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), there are critical deficiencies in the implementation of safeguards designed to prevent the transfer of arms in violation of international law. Despite the existence of international law obligations under international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL), as well as under specific normative frameworks such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, evidence suggests that comprehensive risk assessments and meaningful human rights due diligence are not being systematically applied by relevant actors.

As a result, arms continue to be transferred into contexts where there is credible evidence of risks of serious violations of IHL and IHRL. These transfers perpetuate human suffering and fundamentally undermine international efforts to promote peace, security, and stability. Access to justice is also virtually non-existent for victims of the deadly consequences of arms transfers. This event will convene experts, policymakers, civil society representatives, and other key stakeholders from across the human rights and arms control communities of practice to examine strategies for ensuring that arms transfers are subject to robust human rights oversight and accountability.

Against the backdrop of escalating global militarization, the Geneva Academy, the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva (QUNO) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom are hosting this public event to discuss:

- The role and responsibilities of States and the private sector actors in the arms trade;
- Enduring obstacles to access to justice and accountability in arms transfer decision-making processes
- The nexus between international arms transfers and serious violations of international legal norms
- Participants will also engage with the priority areas for action identified in the OHCHR report, with a focus on enhancing safeguards, strengthening due diligence obligations, and promoting accountability for the adverse human rights impacts of arms transfers

Discussants will be listed in due course.

Light refreshments will be served.

REGISTRATION

We kindly ask you to register here:

<https://bit.ly/42LoD8S>

