

*Abstract:*

The post-Cold War era has been marked by a surge of conventional arms regulation initiatives, driven by logics of Human Security and the will for global improvement of human rights and the human condition worldwide. Western states, carried by new ethical foreign policies, but also internal pressures from civil society, greatly contributed to the inclusion of humanitarian considerations in world politics. These have spread to enter the real of arms exportations, until then part of every states' sovereign right. In addition to treaties banning the use and exportation of certain inhumane weapons, the most remarkable innovation was the creation of an Arms Trade Treaty in 2013, with the aim to regulate the trade of all conventional weapons. Under this regime, states are expected to apply caution and restraint when engaging in this business. In particular, risk assessment regarding the conflict and humanitarian condition in the receiving state must be conducted before exportations can be authorised.

These developments of arms regulations correspond with the policy discourse adopted by Western states during the same period, which would imply that they would be the first to join, apply and promote them. However, there is a gap between discourse and practice, highlighted particularly by NGOs, which are trying to hold states accountable, as there is no inspection body provided by the ATT. But, as was pointed out by various studies, there is a plurality of reasons why states are both promoting international regulations and failing to respect them.