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**BEYOND PROXY WARS: THE ARMS TRADE TREATIES
IMPLEMENTATION AND CONSEQUENCES IN THE YEMEN
WAR**

Bachelor's Thesis

Program of International Relations

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Tallinn 2019

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The document length is 8969 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

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ABSTRACT

The war in Yemen has lasted for four years without any signs that are indicating that it is coming to an end. The United Nations has announced that the country is facing the world's worst humanitarian crisis, as many different fractions operate in the war. The main actors in the war are the Saudi-led coalition that are battling non-state actors, such as the Houthis and the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The Saudi-led coalition suspects that the Houthi rebel group is armed by Iran thus, new reports indicate that the end users of the Saudi-led coalitions arms purchasers are infect the Houthis and Al-Qaeda. The proxy war in Yemen between the Saudi-led coalition and Iran has overlooked international law, international humanitarian law as the Houthis have seized the control of the Hodeida port which is the main import entry. The Saudi-led coalition has carried out numerous air campaigns that have targeted the port of Hodeida, school busses, hospitals and other unauthorized territories that are prohibited under international law as well as international humanitarian law. The air campaigns have caused food insecurity, malnutrition as well as water contamination that initially contributed to cause a cholera epidemic in the country. The people that are seemingly vulnerable by the food insecurity are families and more specifically woman and children as they are precisely exposed to malnutrition. The United Nations has adopted the Arms Trade Treaty which is a legally binding treaty, that for the first time regulates the end-users of arms to eradicate human rights abuses as well as armed conflicts. This was to be done by establishing a mechanism that monitors the arms imports, export and transfers to third parties as well as creating a tracking system that would initially reduce armed conflict and terrorism as well. This research makes findings that indicate that the biggest arms providers are not complying with the commitments made in the ATT. Though some of them have ratified the treaty there are implications indicating that full implementation is lacking in regard to the end-user certificates. The bigger arms providers have been supporting the Saudi-led coalitions militarily despite their knowledge of the war crimes that are committed in Yemen which disregards the implementation of the ATT.

Keywords: ATT, Yemen, Saudi-led coalition, end-use, export licences, implementation

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MENA	Middle Eastern and North Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace and Reacher Institute
UAE	United Arab Emirate
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament
TIV	Trade Indicator Value

INTRODUCTION

There has been a war in Yemen for the past four years, between the Saudi-led coalition which mainly comprises of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirate against the Iranian backed Houthi rebels. The two have been in war between each other, as the Saudi-led coalition suspects that the rebel group is armed by Iran as they are a Zaydi, Shia minority in Yemen. Despite the often referred to Sunni, Shia divide this war is beyond that matter as it has quickly turned into an arms race as arms sales to Saudi Arabia as well as UAE has increased over the past four years. The arms have often been used by the Saudi-led coalition as there are controversy surrounding the matter of the arms use in the Yemen war. On the 24th of December 2014, 130 countries have come together and signed an international legally binding treaty called the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which has special provisions that aims to eradicate the numbers of arms conflict in the world. The treaty has a legally binding instrument, that monitor the participating states imports, exports and transfers of arms through the protocol adopted by the articles. This was to create transparency between countries by sharing information, reduce the possibility of non-state actors to obtain crucial military technology, and to ensure international laws are respected and applied by both the arms importing and the exporting states.

The war in Yemen has intensified over the past few years, as reports continue to emerge of the serious humanitarian crisis that the countries civilians are faced with. The United Nations has categorized the war to have caused the world's worst humanitarian crisis as the civilians are faced with famine, cholera disease, malnourishment and constant shelling by the coalition members. This paper will measure if the ATT assessment criteria are applied before export licenses are issued by the top arms selling North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries, by focusing on the end-use of the arms that are exported to the Saudi-led coalition specifically Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This paper will argue that the NATO member states have not complied with the ATT, as the treaty lacks an accountability mechanism, as the treaty does not hold countries that fail to implement the treaty accountable for their failure to make appropriate assessments prior to the export license issuing. It shall also argue that, countries knowledge of their arms being used against civilians does not hold effect to follow the procedures that are established under the ATT provisions.

The methodology that will be applied to this research, is the discourse content analysis and the data used in this paper are collected by the Stockholm Peace and Research Institute, which collects information on the world's arms imports as well as exports. Another source that will be used in this research is the United Nations articles and journals as well as other Non-governmental Organizations collected data. The structure of this research will give a general over view on the Arms trade in the

Middle East as it looks through the biggest arms importing and exporting states in the world and what significance it holds in the case of the Saudi-led coalition as it also looks into the arms contributions in Yemen. The second section will introduce the ATT and how it was implemented and ratified. It will also look if the exporting states have been complying with the basic provisions of the treaty and the third section will draw analysis on why the treaty has failed. The findings that the research makes is that the treaty has too many gaps that fails to hold the state parties accountable on the accuracy of the information that they share with the ATT Secretariat and that there has been a lack of political will to comply with the ATT commitments.

1. ARMS TRADE TO THE SAUDI-LED COALITION AND THE ESCALATING WAR IN YEMEN

1.1 Contemporary arms trade in the Middle – East: a general over view

The total world military expenditure was estimated to be \$1.8 trillion in 2018, as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data indicates that there has been a 2.6 per cent growth in the arms industry in comparison to the previous year. (SIPRI 2019, f). The arms sales market has grown over the years, as the producers range from private entities to government entities whom provide not only arms but also training to its clients. The biggest spenders were China, the United States, Saudi Arabia, India and France as they account for 60 per cent of the total global military spending as Saudi Arabia allocates 8.8 per cent of their annual gross domestic product (GDP) on military equipment's. (*ibid*). The increase in the military expenditure can be explained through the unstable security climate that has been present in the Middle East for the past decades, as the contemporary conflicts intensified following the events of the 2010 Arab Spring Upraise. The revolution has escalated into several of wars – the Syrian war that began in 2011 and the Yemen war that began in 2015. However, Saudi Arabia is not the only country in the Middle East that has increased its military expenditure as Oman, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel have also done the same. (*ibid*).

The biggest arms suppliers are the NATO member countries as illustrated in the table below. The table indicates arms exports between the years 2010 to 2018 by presenting the numbers as Trend Indicator Values (TIV) in millions. The TIV is the methodology used by SIPRI to illustrate different trends of arms imports, as well as exports as there is no internationally agreed methodology to measure the arms sales – as some countries report export licenses that were issued, and others use data collected by customs agencies. (SIPRI 2019, g). The commonality amongst the top arms providers are that they are all permanent UN Security Council members rank to be the largest arms exporters almost consistently following one another – hence, as Germany exports more than China and the United Kingdom. The arms exporting countries have yet another commonality which is that seven out of the ten are NATO alliance members. Moreover, the United States has been supplying military equipment for decades to countries all around the world – during the second world war the US was providing arms to the French to defeat Germany, as the country was facing the worst financial recession in all times, as for the arms sales they managed to revive their economy. (Rothbard 1963, 14). Since the great depression the arms industry of the United States has been growing, as the market

has transformed to a highly profitable business as the equipment's from the United States are viewed to be superior.

Table 1. Top 10 Arms Exporting Countries SIPRI (TIV)

Rank 2010-2018	Rank 2009-2017	Supplier	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2010-2018
1	1	United States	8074	9022	9086	7571	9601	9931	9955	12485	10508	86233
2	2	Russia	6208	8690	8414	7932	5387	5842	6685	5741	6409	61308
3	4	France	865	1731	1009	1469	1643	2017	2218	2302	1768	15022
4	3	Germany	2725	1339	834	799	1790	1759	2518	1980	1277	15021
5	5	China	1478	1252	1515	2047	1160	1845	2360	1227	1040	13926
6	6	United Kingdom	1157	1055	929	1610	1651	1179	1367	1235	741	10922
7	7	Spain	263	1429	546	728	1050	1163	471	820	1188	7658
8	8	Israel	654	538	455	420	393	721	1441	1254	707	6583
9	9	Italy	539	947	747	862	671	664	619	802	611	6462
10	11	Netherlands	371	546	863	367	631	461	471	1132	369	5211
		Others	3472	3532	3984	3319	2876	2936	3405	2846	2969	29340
		Total	25807	30080	28383	27125	26853	28516	31511	31824	27587	257687

Source: SIPRI. (2019 d).

The table also illustrates how the arms sales trend has increased since the 2010 revolution, as the numbers of arms exported by the US and France keep increasing consistently year by year. Other NATO members such as Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands arms exports keep on fluctuating thus, maintaining their established positions when it comes to the arms exports. The top five arms exporting countries account for 75 per cent of the total global arms exports and the Middle Eastern countries import 35 per cent of the global arms according to SIPRI. The reason why table one is relevant to address is, because according to the top ten most arms importing countries are relevantly located in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries as table two indicates. Between the years 2010 to 2018 Saudi Arabia along with the United Arab Emirate (UAE), are the larger arms purchasers in the Middle East as their demand for arms have increased substantially over the years. Even unstable countries such as Iraq are on the list below though the region has been under the threat of militant groups – the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) who held control of territories in Iraq since the year 2011 to this day as they are known to be subject to numerous war crimes. (Cronin 2015, 89).

Table 2. Top 10 Arms Importing Countries Arms Transfers Database (TIV)

Rank 2010-2018	Rank 2009-2017	Recipient	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2010-2018
1	1	India	2909	3596	4395	5376	3334	3065	3021	2917	1539	30152
2	2	Saudi Arabia	1083	1222	1033	1615	2741	3334	2923	4060	3810	21822
3	3	China	1034	1102	1675	1372	1137	1169	1041	1190	1566	11287
4	4	Australia	1511	1559	868	236	919	1464	1025	1813	1572	10966
5	5	UAE	607	1200	1119	2275	791	1266	1193	1074	1101	10626
6	8	Egypt	686	630	281	675	420	1438	1684	2403	1484	9701
7	7	Algeria	834	1126	816	312	430	858	2873	962	1318	9530
8	6	Pakistan	2199	1108	993	1075	770	849	864	752	777	9387
9	9	South Korea	1282	1574	1078	184	721	272	1113	1068	1317	8610
10	12	Iraq	434	574	476	353	636	1422	1730	966	596	7187
		Others	13228	16389	15649	13652	14954	13379	14045	14616	12507	128419
		Total	25807	30080	28383	27125	26853	28516	31511	31824	27587	257687

Source: SIPRI. (2019 e).

The arms sales demand to the Middle East has increased over the years, as Saudi Arabia is according to table two the second largest arms importer in the world. It is relevant to notice that Saudi Arabia was importing most arms in the year 2017, as their purchases have been consistently growing for the past eight years. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), seems to also have consistently increased their arms imports as 2010 the sales were significantly lower than in 2018, as they amplified their imports by 494 million TIV. This raises the question about what national security threats are the Saudis facing as they are using 8.8 per cent of their annual GDP on defense along with the United Arab Emirates as it follows to be the second largest arms importer in the region according to SIPRI data.(SIPRI 2019, c).

1.2 The war in Yemen- The Saudi-Led coalition and the Houthis

It has been four years since the war in Yemen began as it was facilitated by the Arab Spring Upraise which turned into a civil war in the year 2015. Before the 1990's Yemen was divided into two separate countries – Yemen Arab Republic which was backed by Saudi Arabia located in the north and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen backed by the Soviet Union that was located in the south. (Laub 2015, 1). As the two countries were unified in the year-1990 and the Republic of Yemen was found. The methods used to distribute the political powers amongst the two was to appoint the president of the north Ali Abdullah Saleh to be the president of the south Ali Salim al-Bayd becoming the vice president. (Carapico 1993, 3). Since the unification there has been many protests as well as wars as the southerners felt marginalized by the Salah rule. (*ibid*). The first democratic procedure in 1993, created a unicameral parliament as the party found by Salah called the General People's

Congress party won majority of the seats in the parliament that created a centralized government in Sana'a. (Wiktorowicz 2004, 207; Carpico 1993, 3).

As the civilians were demanding Salah to step down groups of insurgences were emerging such as the Al-Qaeda from the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Ansar Allah also known as the Houthis, and the Al-Hirak secessionist from the south. (Laub 2015, 2). Salah was asked to step down from power in 2011, due to the discontent of the people. He initially agreed to exercise peaceful transfer of power by following the protocol established by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), to the vice president Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi as protests were shifted into a nationwide phenomenon. (Boone 2011; UN Security Council 2017). Thus, Salah promised to stepdown from power he used a 30-day transitional period to consolidate the powers to Hadi which he failed to comply with the commitments made as he instead continued to support the Houthi militias. (*ibid*).

The GCC together with the international community adopted resolution 2014 which called for ceasefire amongst all fractions, Salah to step down to fulfil the commitments made in the GCC initiatives and a referendum to be organized. (UN, 2011). Salah stepped down from power, hence he continued to maintain control over the military and the political establishment and publicly formed an alliance with the Houthis in 2015 – who are a Zaydi Shia militant group in Yemen. (*ibid*). He provided the national military stockpile as well as economic assistant to the Houthis. (*ibid*). However, the arms also reached other militia groups who opposed the new government, as he encouraged them to carry out air missile campaigns in the north of Yemen to target the borders of Saudi Arabia. (UN Security Council 2017, 34-37).

This urged the UN Security Council to adopt resolution 2216 on April 2015, which called for an arms embargo on the Salah militant group as the resolution condemned the supply, sales and transfer of arms by all parties. (UN 2015, 5). The Houthi forces also took control of a substantial proportion of North Yemen as they seized control of the capital Sana'a in September 2015, as they launched an air missile attack towards Hadis presidential residence which caused him to go into self-imposed exile. (Salisbury 2017, 8). The Houthis taking control of the shipping port has caused the Saudi-led coalition to impose air, land and sea blockade to the south of Yemen as without the authorization of Riyadh no one had the right to enter or exit the country. (*ibid*, 11). The blockade is still in place, as it rejects humanitarian assistance to reach Yemen as they suspect Iran to be using the shipping port as a arms supply entry point thus, it its suspected to be the reality of the case. (Janeu 2016, 1). The Saudi-led coalition comprises of the United Arab Emirate, Saudi Arabia mainly and six other GCC members they were backed by the United States.

Saudi Arabia retaliated against Salah, as they wanted to implement the rule of Hadi and also believed that the monarchy was in crisis, as crown prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) was appointed to be the next inline. The al-Saud monarchy believed that the attacks of the Salah forces, were to challenge the newly appointed crown prince. (Stensline 2015, 1). The threat in the border caused an air campaign code named Operation Decisive Storm to be launched on March 2016 targeting the Houthi militants. (*ibid*). Saudi Arabia together with the GCC became increasingly suspicious that the arms were being supplied by the Islamic Republic of Iran as Saudi Arabia submitted a letter to the President of the Security Council and other GCC members followed suit. In the letter Saudi Arabia claimed that resolution 2216 was breached by Iran as they claimed to have found ballistic missiles “Zilzal-3” as well as other weapons such as AK-47 in the possession of the militants, which were manufactured in Iran. (UN 2016, 1-2). Moreover, the Iranian government rejected the allegations as they claimed it to be “pure fabrications and unsubstantiated allegations” in a letter that the Iranian UN ambassador wrote to the President of the Security Council to address the claims. (UN 2016, 1).

The war still continues as there has not been any tangible efforts to consolidate the relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The coalition continues to suspect that Iran is providing arms to non-state actors thus, Iranian government continues to dismiss those allegations. According to the Middle East institute the US has conducted a thorough investigation on Iranian involvement in the actions carried out by the Houthis thus, found little evidence to back the claims. (Feierstein 2018). There is also other analysis that suggest that the Houthis are not Iranian proxy, but rather a local political fraction that is driven by local grievances, as they compete for power and resources. (Jaunea 2019, 1). Numerous of reports have emerged by several news agencies that indicate that the arms imported to the coalition are in the possession of militia groups. (CNN 2019). As the reports claim that the coalition uses “the US-manufactured weapons as a form of currency to buy the loyalties of militias” (*ibid*). On April 15th, 2019, there has been reports indicating that French arms have contributed to war crimes such as air strikes and offence attacks by the coalition which, have targeted numerous civilians. (DISCLOSE 2019).

According to the Yemen Data Project between March 2016 and May 2019 there has been 19, 652 air strikes conducted by the coalition, as 30 per cent of the bombings were hitting civilian targets. The targets were food and water supplies, farms markets, life stocks, fishing boats and reservoirs of drinking water. (Disclose 2019). The air strikes have also contributed to numerous civilian deaths, as 17, 908 people have lost their lives since the first air strikes of the Saudi-led coalition according to Yemen Data Project. The increase in the arms sales to the Saudi led coalition can be an assistance

from the arms shipping countries to combat the Houthi rebels, and also profit from the ongoing war in Yemen

1.2.1 The Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen

Since the intervention in Yemen started in 2015, by the Saudi-led coalition the war has intensified as it has displaced millions of people, caused the world's worst humanitarian crisis according to the United Nations. One of the core reasons for the intensified humanitarian conditions is according to analysis, the Houthi militant taking control of the vital port city of Hodeida humanitarian assistants has not been frequently accessible as the port was bombed in 2018 by the coalition. (BBC, 2018; UN 2019). The air, land and sea blockade imposed on Yemen has also been a major contributor to the worsening humanitarian conditions, as humanitarian entry has to have prior authorization from Riyadh into the Yemeni ports. (Fink 2017, 294). The justifications that the Saudi authorities use originates from arms embargo that, was placed by the UN resolution 2216 in the year 2015, as they continue to suspect that Iranians are supplying arms through the port cities to the Houthi rebels. Hence, this goes against the 1949 Additional Protocol of the Geneva Convention articles 13 to 18 as civilian populations should not be targeted during the times of war as they are subject to be protected as article 14 states;

“Starvation of civilians as a method of combat is prohibited. It is therefore prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless, for that purpose, objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works.”

The guidelines set in place by the additional protocol has been disregarded by the coalition, as they have continued to target civilian territories and stop food aid shipments. The civilians have become overwhelmingly food insecure, as the country is mostly import dependent as their dry climate is not ideal for food production. The World Food Program estimates that up to 20 million people are food insecure and three million of them are pregnant or nursing women as well as children under the age of five are severely malnourished. (WFP). The challenges that the people face with the aggressive humanitarian conditions are famine, cholera outbreak due to the water scarcity, internally displacement, scarcity in food. (OCHA 2019, 1). Around six million people need nutrition, 15.8 million are in need of medical assistants, 12.6 million people are in need for clean water and sanitary hygiene products, 4.8 million are need of protection mostly children, three million are in need of

shelter as the airstrikes has destroyed their homes and 2.8 million children are unable to access education. (*ibid*,1-5).

The acute humanitarian condition according to analysis has intensified, as the Saudi-led coalition has carried out numerous in discriminatory air strikes that have targeted civilian houses, hospitals and schools which has caused the cholera epidemic to further intensify. (Minanci 2019; Clarke 2018). The airstrikes targeting civilians are against international law as well as international humanitarian law as both hospitals as well as schools are crowded by vulnerable people that are entitled for protection. (ICRC 2010). The international community has provided humanitarian aid to Yemen hence, the aid has not always reached the people that were in acute need for the assistance. The World Food Program discovered that humanitarian assistance was in fact even weaponized as the food arriving to Sana'a has been resold by the Houthis as they deny access to those in need. (WFP 2018). This intensifies the many challenges that the humanitarian condition will cost for the survival of the future generations in Yemen, as both sides weaponizes food one by restricting their imports and the other by restricting distribution.

2. THE ARMS TRADE TREATY AND ITS IMPLIMENTATION

2.1 The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT): A general overview

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), is a legally binding treaty that for the first time established a common international standard for the imports, exports and transfers of conventional arms. The treaty has bases on the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law as well as international human rights law. The treaty stems from resolution 61/89, as it has for the first time established the scope and draft parameters. It requested from the UN Secretary General to establish a group of governmental experts to monitor geographic arms distributions and reports of the imports, export, and transfers of conventional arms. (UN 2006, 61/89, 2). The resolution also requests the Security Council to provide the expert monitors further assistance and services to support their data collections in order to establish the mechanisms to future adaptation of the ATT. (*ibid*). The treaty was adopted in June 11th, 2013 under the 67th UN General Assembly session, as resolution 67/234 was adopted. (UN 2013). The treaty has its origins from article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, as its aim is “to promote the establishment as well as maintenance of international peace and security with the diversion for armament of the world’s human and economic resources...” (UN Charter 1945, 7). To achieve the goal there was a necessity for a transparent universal disarmament and non-proliferation mechanism which, is established with the support of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).

The treaties main aim is to eradicate the possibility of future arms transfer to result into illegal arms markets, or unauthorized end-user(s), which includes terrorist’s organization as well as other non-state actors. (ATT 2013, 1). The ATT shall eradicate the illegal trade of small arms and light weapons in all aspects as well as its illegal manufacturing and trafficking in the form of fire arms, their parts, ammunitions, and the states to have the ability to identify and trace the manufactured small arms and light weapons that are dispatched on their behalf. (*ibid*). The treaty aims to assess the arms contributions on social, economic and humanitarian conditions to illegal or unregulated trade in conventional arms as woman and children are vulnerable during the times of armed conflict as they are subject to armed violence. (*ibid*). The arms that fall under the scope of ATT are specified in article 2.1 of the treaty and are the following.

The Arms that fall into the scope of Article 2.1

The treaty applies to all conventional arms listed in the following category:

- (a) Battle tanks;
- (b) Armoured combat vehicles;
- (c) Large-calibre artillery systems;
- (d) Combat aircraft;
- (e) Attack helicopters;
- (f) Warships;
- (g) Missiles and missile launchers;
- (h) Small arms and light weapons.

The treaty recognizes the tangible challenges that victims in arms conflicts face, their need of care, assistance, rehabilitation as well as social and economic inclusion. (*ibid*, 2). It also urges the arms exporters to be mindful of legitimate trade and ownership of the arms. (*ibid*). The ATT does not however hold effect if individual or collective security is a matter of concern as it falls into the scope of UN Charter Article 51. (*ibid*). The parties have an obligation to monitor their imports, exports and trans shipments to avoid that the arms end up into the control of unauthorized users. The treaty urges its members to assess if there are possibilities that the arms would contribute or undermined international peace and security, is a subject to facilitate violations to on international conventions, protocols relating to terrorism to which the exporting state is a party. (*ibid*, 5). The ATT also has specified the conduct of the assessment procedure before selling the arms which stems from article 7 of the treaty.

The seven conditions that the Article 7 of the ATT export assessment mechanisms are:

- 1) If the exporting arms undermine international peace and security, international law, international humanitarian law, breach international conventions and protocols such as terrorism or transnational organized crimes as well as protocols or conventions that the exporting country is a party to.
- 2) The arms exporting parties should also do proper assessments to mitigate the possibilities that condition one would not take place with adopting confidence-building measures or implementing a program with the arms importing country that would reassure the security of the end-user.

- 3) If tangible assessments are explored and no agreements to mitigate the possibilities of unauthorized end-user is reached to be the subject of the importing state, the exporting state shall not authorize exports.
- 4) The assessments made by the exporting country has to make detailed assessments if the end use of the conventional arms would be subject to facilitate serious act of gender-based violence against women and children.
- 5) Each exporting state is subject to ensure that all authorizations for export of conventional arms covered in the arms category are issued prior to the export
- 6) Shall prepare a detailed report regarding the authorization of arms exports, availability upon request, the importing state shall provide a report on the transit or trans shipments of the arms, and they may adhere to the country's national legislations
- 7) If the exporting country learns about abuses after arms shipment has been authorized and the breaches fall into condition one, it should reassess the authorization and to consult the importing country.

This treaty was adopted to reduce the numbers of arms conflicts, to reduce human suffering, political repression, organized crimes and human rights abuses which disables the countries to attain investment which ultimately prohibits them to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals. (UNOAD 2019).

2.2.1. The Countries that Voted for the ATT in Resolution 67/234

On the 2nd of April 2013, the United Nations 71st General Assembly plenary session in New York facilitated the ATT universal adoption as the 193 sovereign nations gathered for the meeting. The resolution 67/234 got a bipartisan support, as 154 countries voted in support of the resolution, three voted against, 23 countries abstained and 14 were absent from the vote. (UN, 2013). Amongst the countries that voted for were all the NATO member states as well as the United States thus, they remained to be the biggest arms suppliers in the world according to the previously mentioned SIPRI data. The United Arab Emirate has also voted for the adoption of the resolution. (*ibid*). The three countries that voted against were, North Korea, Iran and Syria. (*ibid*). Amongst the 23 countries that abstained were, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. (*ibid*). Initially, the resolution was adopted by 154 members of the international community thus, only 101 countries remain to adhere to the ATT commitments. (ATT 2019).

2.2.2. Have all the large arms suppliers ratified the treaty?

Though the ATT stepped into force on 24th of December 2014, the biggest arms provider i.e. the United States has failed to stick to its commitments as they have never ratified the treaty. (ATT 2019, 1). The ATT failed to be ratified, as the United States Congress voted against the bill as they had concerns that the adaptation of ATT would threaten their second amendment i.e. a constitutional right to bear arms. (Abramson Webb 2019). On the 25th of April 2019, the Trump administration has announced their withdrawal of the ATT, as Donald J. Trump attended the National Rifle Association's annual conference, which is also the country's most powerful gun lobby. (Colvin Pane 2019). The sudden withdrawal can be explained through the emerging 2020 US presidential elections, as Trump seeks the republican voters support as well as the lobby groups, as they have complained that the ATT has implications on their sales. (*ibid*). According to the former US leader of the ATT negotiations has argued that the claims made by the current administration are baseless, as the treaty does not override the US constitution. (Abramson Webb 2019).

However, the United States seems to not be the only co-signer that has failed to ratify the treaty, as 32 others have also not complied with the goals that they were initially committed to. (*ibid*). Amongst them are Israel, United Arab Emirate and Turkey. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France issued an official statement, where they acknowledge that the government is fully committed to implement the ATT. (France Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). Other parties that have adhered to their commitments and ratified the ATT are Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, as they all – including France – published their first annual report on May 31st, 2016. (ATT 2019). Thus, the countries have ratified the ATT have they committed to the standard mechanisms that the treaty has set in place? This shall be addressed in the following sub-chapter.

2.3. The Role of the End-user certificate and its Implications in the Yemen War

The war in Yemen continues for its fourth year as it is fueled by the ever-present proxy wars between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The media company CNN has sent its reporters to Yemen as they uncover a very concerning development in the war as they have serious evidences of the end-user agreements breaches. (CNN 2019). The reports imply that the arms provided by the United States to the Saudi-led coalition was transferred to the Houthis and the al-Qaeda militants. (*ibid*). The arms sold to the coalition has also reached the hands of second-hand sellers as many small shops operate in markets in the south west where their main sales comprise of US arms. (*ibid*) The military hardware that were on the display were tanks, pistols, hand grenades and assault rifles. (*ibid*). All the US heavy

equipment's are starkly in display with their serial numbers attached to them which are to be traced back to its original manufacturers from Beaumont, Texas by a arms manufacturer called Navistar company. The tanks are according to the article apart of a shipment made to the UAE, which was subject to be transferred into Yemen later. In the article the US Pentagon spokesperson John Michael has commented on the matter, he claims that the US has not given the coalition any authorization for the transfers. (*ibid*).

The transfers made by the Saudi-led coalition is a clear breaching of the ATT, as there has not been any indications from the US government of authorization of arms transfers that were made. Despite the knowledge of the transfers there has not been any accountability for the arms leakage. The arms have contributed to numerous of attacks where the coalition has targeted civilians and is also a matter that contributes to the severe humanitarian crisis on the ground. The arms transfer also goes against US law according to the department of state as there are assessment criteria's to be made before the transfers as stated in the Foreign Assistance Act and Arms Export Control Act. (US Department of State). Both of the acts only recognize transfers to be made if their purposes are for internal security, legitimate self-defense, if the importing state has been authorized to use military force under the provision of the Charter of the United Nations or if the arms are to assist a third world countries to construct public works and to support economic and social development. (*ibid*). The above mentioned are not legitimate purposes for the transfers, as the Saudi-led coalition is not faced with international security threats, they are not using defensive tactics but rather offensive methods by often targeting civilians, there has not been any UN authorization to use military force nor are they assisting the Yemenis with public work as they are destroying infrastructures with air campaigns. The military technology has also reach to the control of Iranians according to the CNN reports.

The US Senate has drafted a joint resolution to halt arms sales on December 2018, as they expressed a deep concern for the continuing aggression of Mohammed bin Salman (MbS). (US Congress 2019). The concerns were in regard to the in discriminatory air strikes in Yemen, the implications that it has on the humanitarian crisis, the role of MbS in the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi as he drew critique to MbS's conduct in the war in Yemen. (*ibid*). The resolution 69, got a bipartisan support both from the Republican party as well as the Democrats without amendments. (*ibid*). The bill was thus, vetoed by Donald Trump as he continues to support the Saudi-led coalition. (Ryan, Demirjian 2019). The Trump administration has also agreed a \$110 billion-dollar arms deal with the MbS regime in 2017, as the US State of Department recognizes the deal to be the largest foreign military sales made by the country. (US Department of State 2019). Despite the fact that there were findings made by news agencies, and NGO's that suggest that the arms sold by the top arms exporters

leaked to the hands of the militant groups by the transfers made by the importing state the political leadership has failed to apply national laws to the matter. There has not been political discourse to this matter by the most powerful nation in the world, which suggests questions if the fight is really against the Houthis or is there a deeper will that the arms sales serve.

2.3.1. The end-use of French arms

The United States is not been the only country who has provided arms to the Saudi-led coalition and has contributed to violate the end-use of the arms. A French Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), called DISCLOSE obtain classified documents from the French army which dates to September 2018, remarking that there was a secret arms shipment made from the port of le Havre has contributed to civilian targeting. (DISCLOSE 2019). The NGO's obtained document indicate that French artillery which include assault rifles, warships, guns and tanks, produced by a French state-owned arms company called Nexter were included in the shipment made by the state. (*ibid*). The NGO gives a detailed assessment on the targets that the arms have from the Saudi borders which are classified in the document as "population under threat of bombs" are civilian territories located in towns, villages, farms and farm villages, as 48 tanks are positioned towards the targets. (*ibid*).

The reports indicate that the army document was presented to French president Emmanuel Macron by the defense ministry and targets are specified in page four of the document which states "back up loyalist troops and Saudi armed forces in their progression into Yemeni territory". (*ibid*). The statement can be translated that the "population under threat of bombs" are targets of the coalition and there has not been any halt by the French president in regard to this matter. The assessments suggest that the ATT Article 7.4 combined with Article 2.1 has been breached as the French state had of the knowledge that the coalition was premeditating an attack against the civilians and has not taken steps to halt exports or question their acts. There have been many air campaigns that the Saudi-led coalition has carried out in Yemen, the DRM documents indicate that the aircraft that are used by the coalition have lethal technological designs that are maintained by French engineers. The NGO states that attacks carried out by the coalition on the 20th of September 2016, has targeted civilians claiming 15 lives where 12 of them were children.

On the 20th of January 2019, French defense minister Florence Parly was asked if French arms are used to target civilians which to, she responded that "To my knowledge, land-based equipment sold to Saudi Arabia is used not for offensive means but for defensive purposes at the border with Saudi Arabia." (*ibid*). Since the reports have emerged the three journalist that have reported on the matter

were summons by the French intelligence, as they are accused of leaking classified state documents. (France 24 2019). It seems that there is a lack of political will to end the arms sales to the Saudi-led coalition or hold them accountable of their actions. As there is knowledge of the human rights abuses that the arms contribute to as the ATT article 2.1 as well as Article 7, asks states to make assessments in regard to human rights abuses to exporting countries before the arms shipments.

The government of France disregards the end-use certificate, as there is clear evidence that they commit serious human rights violations that are violating international humanitarian law. There has not also been any display of accountability by the international community when it comes to the human rights abuses. The only fractions that have criticized the end-use of the arms are international human rights NGO's such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Since the information sufficed by DISCLOSE the French defense ministry has announced yet another arms shipment to Saudi Arabia despite the reports as the defense minister Parly stated "As far as the French government is aware, we have no proof that the victims in Yemen are the result of the use of French weapons". (France 24 2019).

2.3.2. The Arms end-use of Germany

Following the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel has announced on October 2018 a six-month arms embargo on Saudi Arabia and has since renewed the arms embargo to another six months. (DW 2019). The suspension of the arms sales has drawn criticism from the United Kingdom as well as France as some of their arms industries are dependent of the German manufacturers. (*ibid*). Despite the arms embargo, there has been official reports on the 2018 arms sales made to the kingdom which, is worth €160 million, that accounts for a €50 million increase to the sales made the prior year according to the figures reveal by the Federal Ministry of Economy. (Kynast 2019). Thus, Germany has suspended their arms sales to Saudi Arabia they have since increased their sales to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as from October to December they have sold more than €40 million worth arms to UAE, who are a part of the coalition. (Conrad, Werkhäuser 2019). The UAE government is co-operating with Saudi Arabia as they have similar role to play in the Yemeni humanitarian suffering, as they are also contributing to the air campaigns and target civilians. (Hathway, Francis, Haviland, Kethireddy 2019). They also account for the humanitarian blockade, which makes their arms-end use subject to contribute to the humanitarian suffrage on the ground.

The German news agency DW has made discovery that arms exported to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirate are used on also human rights violations as the tanks and other artillery manufactured

by Germany are components used by the Saudi-led coalition. There are German manufactured defense ships that are used to perform the sea blockade in Yemen which block humanitarian assistance to reach the Yemeni ports. (Conrad, Hein, 2018). There are also war planes, arms, tanks in Yemen that have a substantial role on the war as it is frequently used by the coalition to perform offensive attacks on civilian targets. (*ibid*). When the German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier was asked about his knowledge regarding the arms end-use in Yemen, he said that he has no knowledge that they contribute to human rights violations. (*ibid*). Again, this can be identified to be another ATT commitment breach as this disregards the ATT article 7, as the right assessments were not made before the export licenses were issued. Germany prides itself to be one of the strictest arms exports license issuer, thus have been a subject to overlooking the implications that the arms have on the civilians in Yemen. There is a political will that the arms are not used in the war, as one of the conditions by the German Chancellor for the sales was that their end-use wouldn't be in Yemen however, there has been an issue with the importing states compliance to their commitments. (Tridey 2019).

2.3.3. The arms sales of United Kingdom, Spain and Italy

The sales of Spain, United Kingdom and Italy have not been affected by the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The government of Spain has continued to sell arms to Saudi Arabia, as they are the fourth biggest arms sellers to the kingdom. (SIPRI). The reason for the Spanish government to not suspend arms licenses have been due to a protest sparked by workers from the arms manufacturing industry. (Abellán 2018). The Spanish government has not indicated any willingness to comply with the ATT, thus being one of the parties that has signed the treaty. The United Kingdom has taken the same position, as they continue to sell arms to the coalition. The government has issued a statement that their arms sales are contributing to encourage peace as the war is caused by the Houthi rebels, the statement also addressed that the arms exports are due to the strategic ties towards UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Italy has also continued to sell arms to Saudi Arabia, as their main arms manufacturing facility is located in the island of Sardinia, by the company called RWM Italia which is a German subsidiary company from Rheinmetall AG. (ECCHR 2018). The MK air bombs produced by the undertaking were found to be in the use of the Saudi-led coalition. The bombs have been used to target civilian objects, as reports from the United Nations indicated in 2017, that a family of six including a pregnant mother and four children were killed in an air campaign. (Vita 2019; ECCR 2019). There has not been any accountability for the role of the arms used by the company nor the Italian government

regarding the matter, as they continue to issue export licenses despite their knowledge of the human rights abuses. The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, Yemeni based NGO Mwatana Organization for Human Rights as well as Italian based NGO Rete Disarmo filed a legal investigation to the Italian Public Prosecutors office in Rome. The NGO's called for an investigation of the Italian authorities' assessments made prior to the authorizations of the arms shipments even after the information became public knowledge. (*ibid*). There has not also been any backlash from the international community nor from the ATT committee in regard to the matter.

3. ANALYSIS ON THE SURVIVAL OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

3.1. The Arms Trade Treaty Accountability

According to the ATT yearly reports of 2018, there has been a substantial decline in the reporting of the arms imports, exports, transfers and trans-shipments by the parties that have originally committed to the treaty. (ATT monitor 2019, 31). The report indicates that as many as 26 State Parties have not submitted their annual reports on the arms imported, exported, and transferred. (*ibid*). The reports have also been often late as in 2016 only 30 countries met the deadline of the annual reports to the ATT committee. (*ibid*). The information that has been reported have been impartial, has lacked accuracy or comprehensive information, which makes it hard to evaluate if the information given to the ATT meets the quality required. (*ibid*, 32). According to the reports the United Kingdom and Austria have not been reporting comprehensive information in regard to imports of arms as they leave the sections empty. (*ibid*). France has not also been reporting accurate information in regard to their imports of their arms as they have only listed small arms and light weapons, and their reports do not specify any hard artillery imported to the country. (*ibid*). There is also a lack of information in regard to destination countries and the end-use of the arms in the reports which makes it hard to make proper assessments of the end-use of the arms as it is a very crucial information to the monitoring of the reports.

In the report it has also been indicated that Germanys largest arms recipients were Yemen in 2016, as their largest exporting equipment were battle tanks, as they accounted for 47 per cent of their exports. (*ibid* 52). There have not been any details in regard to what fraction of the recipient party the battle tanks were going to, which makes the ATT ineffective to draw conclusions. This is because there are no specifications if the arms are subject for an original end-use purpose, or to commit human rights abuses as there were no government in place in the year of 2016. Therefore, the reporting without additional detailed information is problematic, as it is difficult as it makes the reports questionable when it comes to an arms shipment to Yemen in 2016, because there was no functioning government who was the end-user in this case? There are no comprehensive methods for the ATT to hold countries responsible for their arms exports, imports or transfers as the treaty is incapable to hold the parties accountable of their arms contributions in wars. This makes it hard to implement measures to reduce the amount of armed conflicts as there is a decline in the annual reporting of the state parties that have committed to comply by ATT. (ATT Statistics 2019).

According to the statistics of the year 2018, only 11 per cent of the signatures have reported on their arms trade activities as 89 per cent have not. (*ibid*). This is a substantial decline as in 2015, 79 percent of the parties have submitted their annual reports. (*ibid*). This indicates that the treaty is ineffective to hold the parties accountable and they are not meeting their obligations on the reporting of their arms trade activities. It also may be a sign that the treaty is failing, hence it has legally binding instruments countries have not been complying with the main provisions that is to assess the end-use of the arms before issuing the export licenses. The largest arms exporters political leaders also have failed to acknowledge that the arms are contributing to human rights violations by the importing state, which in this case is the UAE and Saudi Arabia. There has been a denial of any knowledge in regard to the arms exported to the coalition ending up in the use of militia groups and, civilian casualties as mass starvation and air strikes have become very common in the war. The treaty might also fail due to the United States announcement to dismiss their subscription to the treaty. The proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen also seems to be a substantial factor to why this treaty has no effect, as the largest arms exporting states are providing arms to the fraction that is committing serious human rights abuses that fall in the category of crimes against humanity.

3.2. The Role of the UN Security Council Members

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six principle organs of the United Nations that has the capacity to ensure international peace and security. The Security Council holds five permanent members that are Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom and the United States that hold a special power to veto matters regarding arms embargos on countries committing human rights violations in armed conflicts. (UN Security Council 2019). These include the issues regarding military interventions arms shipments as well as arms embargos. According to the SIPRI data the members are amongst the biggest arms exporting states as they have not taken measures to impose arms embargos on the Saudi-led coalitions, despite their knowledge of the arms implications to the humanitarian disaster in Yemen. The UN Security Council has instead imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis, under the Security Council resolution 2014, that calls for the disarmament of the rebel group, thus majority of the air strikes have been carried out by the coalition. (UN Security Council 2011; Dallinger 2019). The resolution recognizes that the activities of the Houthis is causing the escalating tensions, thus has failed to acknowledge the Saudi-led coalitions air strikes contribution to the humanitarian crisis that is the direct cause of the sea air and land blockade that is also starving the people in Yemen. (UN Security Council 2011).

The Security Council has appointed the UN Special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffin to broker peace talks between the Houthis and the government forces in 2018. The peace talks were hosted by the Swedish government, as it produced the Stockholm agreement which established the UN resolution 2452. The resolution proposed a cease fire in Hodeida, to remove all heavy artillery from Hodeida, Salif and Ras Issa, and prisoner exchange between the Houthis and the government loyalist which went into effect on January 2019. (UN Security Council 2019). Since the peace deal there has been numerous air strikes conducted by the Saudi-led coalition, therefore may fail as there has not been any talks addressing issues regarding the military intervention in Yemen. The Special Envoy has also failed to address the ATT commitments made amongst the states that subscribed to the treaty and their obligations under international law, in the efforts to establish international peace and security.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Arms Trade Treaties compliance could contribute to the establishments of peace amongst different fractions in the Yemen war. Thus, there seems to be little to no interest in countries to comply by the basic provisions of the treaty, as it has been so far incapable to be implemented fully by all top arms exporters. The arms shipments have continued to the Saudi-led coalition, which have been proven by reports of the United Nations and other NGO's that they have contributed to mass atrocities that have targeted civilians. Despite the parties that have subscribed to the treaties knowledge they have shown unwillingness to suspend arms exports temporarily or exercise arms embargo towards the coalition. The ATT does not seem to be an effective treaty as it lacks an accountability mechanism, as it does not hold the countries accountable if their export licenses are issued to a conflict driven nation, nor if it is used to cause human suffering.

The future of the treaties implementation does not also seem promising, as there has been a substantial decline in participation rate, as countries that have originally signed the treaty have never ratified them despite the treaties directions to implementation period being 90-days. The treaty seems to also lack instruments to collect accurate data, as countries annual reports can leave out important information which can be vital information to the ATT secretariats evaluations on assessing arms imports exports and transfers of arms. This makes it easy for countries to also leave out information regarding export licenses issued to a country, if the countries want to conceal information from the international community which also further destabilizes the future of this treaty.

The political leadership of the top arms providers have also expressed their lack of knowledge regarding the matter of the end-use of the arms exported and when government information is leaked by a news agency or an NGO there has been a constant lack of political discourse on the matter by political leaders. The reason why the beginning of the conclusions mentions that the ATT can establish peace to the Yemen conflict, is because if the treaty would be fully implemented by all parties it could have a possibility for the UNODA to establish a mechanism to perform a process of disarmament together with the Yemen Special Envoy Martin Griffin if the first stage succeeds for the efforts of peace. The disarmament could also be a key to end the humanitarian suffering of the civilians which is a direct consequence of the war between rebel groups and the Saudi-led coalition.

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