A Comprehensive Conventional Weapons Convention:
Military Expenditure, Conflict, Democracy, and Development Nexus

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Military expenditure continues to rise and conventional weapons continue to reach areas of conflict, violators of human rights, and terrorist groups, increasing the number of internal and external conflicts, escalating the level of internal oppression and contributing to the deterioration of living conditions. Every day, thousands of lives are lost, and many more people are injured, orphaned or displaced because of armed violence by conventional weapons, yet no comprehensive treaty on conventional weapons has yet been reached.

There has been no lack of effort and initiatives, but rather a lack of goodwill, proper guidelines, and instruments that would control the arms trade. Therefore, the central arguments the present thesis seeks to examine are the consequences of this lack of an international conventional arms trade treaty on international security, especially in the conflict-torn Middle East. In order to support the claims made in this study the statistics of global arms sales in different time periods are presented and the relationships between armament, conflict, and development examined. Initiatives to regulate arms sales are also reviewed. In order to elicit information on the role of conventional arms deals on the stability, security, and development of Middle-Eastern countries a questionnaire was distributed to a cross-section of people from those countries, and interviews were conducted with a number of diplomats and politicians.

The findings reveal that increasing armament does not decrease the internal or external threat against the country, instead it jeopardizes its economic growth and prevents progress. The findings also indicate that lack of democracy plays an important role in increasing armament, so arms can be used against opponents of the regime, and not to defend the homeland.

The thesis recommends that governments and international agencies such as the UN should work seriously towards an international conventional arms treaty similar to those on weapons of mass destruction.
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