PREFACE BY THE EDITORS

The adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) on 2 April 2013, and its entry into force on 24 December 2014 marks the end of a long road towards the achievement of the first global treaty regulating the international trade in conventional arms.

Those who initiated the concept with the support of Nobel Peace Laureates, and began promoting it in the 1990s, were sometimes labelled as utopians and had an uphill struggle to convince governments of its merit. Now, after 20 years in the making, some trumpet the ATT as inevitable and long overdue. Others who are more sceptical point to perceived weaknesses in parts of the Treaty provisions and are concerned that the Treaty will be used as a political tool by the exporting States who dominate the international trade. The fact remains, however, that in today’s increasingly globalized and interconnected trade in conventional arms, every State has an emerging common interest in its regulation.

While the ATT has been successfully established and now has a growing number of ratifications, its impact remains to be seen. The effectiveness of the Treaty will be determined by whether States Parties invest resources in implementing the Treaty, fully respect its obligations, and cooperate with and assist other States Parties.

This book is an article-by-article commentary on the Treaty and not intended to be a complete review of the history of the negotiations or to foreclose further debate on the interpretation and application of the Treaty’s provisions.

We are indebted to the authors without whom this book would obviously not have been possible, many who in addition to contributing their own chapters provided comment and input on others. Their efforts have produced a work which we hope will be a source of valuable information to those who implement the Treaty and evaluate its progress. We especially want to thank Tom Haeck and Shanna Maertens for their considerable contribution in initiating this book and invaluable assistance towards its completion. We are also grateful for the generous assistance of Spencer Chilvers, Alberto Estévez, Sara Kendall, Stan Lee, Michael Meier, Daniel Prins, Matt Schroeder, Daniel Stewart and the International Peace Information Service in Antwerp.

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