

End trade in illegal arms, ecologist urges G20 heads

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Kolkata: City-based ecologist Dhrubajyoti Ghosh has written to the heads of states of G20 countries, urging them to snuff out the illegal arms trade that is fuelling not only terror and military conflicts, but which is also the cause of wars that are environmental nightmares and leave behind nasty climate footprints.

India, US, the UK, China, Russia, France and Germany are among 19 countries, along with the European Union, that make up the international forum of 20 major economies. The heads of these countries, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Barack Obama and French President François Hollande are currently in Paris to attend the climate conference.

In the letter mailed on November 24, Ghosh, who is a UN Global 500 laureate, cited the terror attack in Paris on November 13 to press for an end to the \$2,000 billion trade in illegal arms worldwide.

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Dhrubajyoti Ghosh | LETTER TO G20 HEADS



“The terror-strike in Paris is a shrieking denial of life and everything that we hold dear. It is time for us to set our priorities right. Modern war is not only destructive of human life. It is catastrophic in environmental terms. However, the demand to end war, though noble, is somewhat unrealistic. Yet, the lethal terror in Paris and the resultant shock all over the world, should, at the very least, provide us the opportunity of taking decisive action against illegal trade in arms. At the moment of COP21, we only need to re-

mind ourselves of the role that the illegal arms trade plays in fuelling both terror and military conflicts, and, moreover, that modern military conflicts are not merely human disasters — they are environmental nightmares with nasty climate-footprints,” Ghosh wrote. Urging leaders to transform the misfortune in Paris into a historical opportunity for destroying one of the most callous, cruel and ecologically corrosive trades in the world, the ecologist urged them to arrive at a binding decision on the issue.

“Paris seems to be uniting Presidents from all over the world. Everyone is agreed that something decisive needs to be done about the climate peril. Incidentally, everyone is declaredly also against illegal arms trade. This benign atmosphere of unanimity ought to be conducive to decisive international action against illegal arms trade — not merely ‘banning’ or ‘prohibiting’ it, but stopping it outright,” the letter stated.

Leaders of many countries — including Germany, Japan and Australia, as well as the President of the European Union — have acknowledged the mail. Incidentally, Ghosh is the first ecologist to talk about the footprint of conflicts that are far more ecologically devastating than emissions. “Environmentalists and ecologists have shied away from the issue and never done a study on the impact of a war on the climate. It is high time we raised a voice against illegal weapons that fuel the conflicts,” he explained.