

**Statement by H.E. Ammar Hijazi, Ambassador,
Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs
Ministry of Foreign and Expatriates, State of Palestine before the
Fourth Conference of State Parties, Tokyo, Japan 20-24 August 2018.**

Mr. President,

Allow me to extend our appreciation to your Excellency for leading the work of the 4th conference of the States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Japan for hosting this important conference, as well as to the Secretariat and members of Working Groups for the efforts to prepare for this meeting. We also express our condolences to the delegation of Ghana on the passing of ex Secretary General of the UN Kofi Anan.

Mr. President,

Allow me to begin by congratulating Chile, Brazil and Cameroon for becoming new Members. We believe that States' commitment to apply the provisions of the treaty starts by consenting to be bound by it, and we encourage signatory States to ratify the treaty and call on other states to accede to the treaty to ensure universal adherence to the treaty, thus bringing responsibility and accountability to this important policy area.

Arms Control is a matter of collective security for all states; it rises above narrow interests of the few because it must reflect the interests of the wider international community in preserving regional and global peace and security. The State of Palestine is proud to have recently become the 94th State Party to the Arms Trade (ATT). It is an honor for us to be the first country in the Middle East to sign and ratify the ATT at a time when our region is engulfed in belligerent occupation, conflicts and strife, thus making disarmament and adherence to international law and relevant treaties central to efforts to preserve international peace.

This is borne out of our conviction that multilateralism still matters and that real and universal respect to the international rules based system and the norms it embodies in the form of treaties and conventions is the essential to protect the world from the devastation of chaos and lawlessness. This is especially true in light to the selective application of these norms, which threatens to undermine this and other relevant treaties as well as derail their application and universal respect.

Mr. President,

Treaty implementation lies foremost in the hands of member states. This is why it is important to set clear guidelines to implement the treaty articles. At the heart of this lies article 6 and 7, which subject arms transfer, their ammunition and parts to strict criteria. International human rights and humanitarian treaties and norms represent the

yardstick with which the international community can measure a state's commitment and adherence to the treaty and the values it represents. This entails a responsibility to make every effort to ensure that violations of IHL and IHRL are not provided with arms and ammunition. In effect, any discourse or effort outside this context would not only be counterproductive but also allow states violating international law to escape accountability and remain intransigent in the face of international will.

Hence, in accordance with the principle of respecting and ensuring respect for IHL and human rights, Palestine believes that all States should also end their involvement and support of any State that violates the provisions of IHL and Human Rights. By adhering to this important standard, states would be effectively implementing their responsibility in promoting the Treaty objectives. Inadequate control over transfers of conventional weapons and lack of respect to the provisions of the treaty comes at a high price to human life and dignity. We must show that our commitment to stop all arms trade and transfer to states that violate their international obligations, including states practicing belligerent occupation, is unwavering and absolute. These states should not be permitted to buy weapons. Equally, they must not profit from exporting them. Hence we call for enhancing efforts to ensure transparency and effective treaty implementation, as well as draw links with other efforts, including efforts to strengthen compliance with IHL.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the State of Palestine's commitment to ensure the universal application and respect of the Arms Trade Treaty. We owe this to the countless victims of senseless war, violence, and terror, including state-sanctioned terror. We owe this to all those who wish to live in peace.

Thank you