**Joint Statement**

**Arms Trade Treaty Conference**

**19-23 August 2024**

**General Debate**

Thank you, Mr. President,

This statement is being delivered on behalf of the International Service for Human Rights. the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Al-Haq.

In 2014, when the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force, those who have been actively involved in the adoption of the treaty hoped that it would make a difference in reducing the human suffering caused by weapons and war. Ten years later, it is clear that the ATT States parties have fallen  short of its promise, with thousands of people around the world experiencing direct harm from the arms trade. We are faced with serious challenges in the implementation of the ATT, where actors with the power and capacity to protect people lack the interest to do so. We are also concerned that arms corporations with an interest in the proliferation of war are unfortunately taking the front seat of decision making in multilateral fora.

Since the launching of its genocidal military campaign on Gaza since 7 October 2023, the Israeli military has carried out indiscriminate, disproportionate and other unlawful attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure causing widespread casualties, including through the use of [explosive weapons](https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142432) and [white phosphorus](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/12/israel-white-phosphorus-used-gaza-lebanon). Our organisations are alarmed by the reported news that some States, including the United States  ([US](https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-20-billion-weapons-us-aid-b6a99129c88a5dcc4a4753e20b5e19ec)) have in recent days decided to supply additional military equipment or ‘fast-track’ the supply of military equipment to Israel, in spite of ample evidence of war crimes being committed in Gaza.

Earlier this year, the[Human Rights Council](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F55%2FL.30&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False) called upon all States to cease arms transfers to Israel and to refrain from transfers of surveillance goods and technologies and less-lethal weapons, including ‘dual-use’ items.Similarly, in June, various [UN human rights experts](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/states-and-companies-must-end-arms-transfers-israel-immediately-or-risk) reiterated their demand to stop transfers of weapons and ammunition to Israel immediately.

More recently, in its [advisory opinion](https://www.icj-cij.org/case/186) on the legal consequences of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the International Court of Justice  stressed the structural, systemic and grave nature of the violations committed by Israel in occupied Palestine. In effect, the Court asked States to, *inter alia,*  refrain from any ‘economic dealings which may entrench its [Israel’s] unlawful presence in the territory’, to ‘take steps to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories’, and ‘not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel’s illegal presence in the occupied Palestinian territories.’

Despite these calls and well-documented and reported grave violations and crimes against the Palestinian population, the supply of arms and military support to Israel from the United States (US), — [the largest single provider of military aid](https://www.stimson.org/2023/in-shadow-of-war-a-snapshot-of-u-s-military-assistance-to-israel/) to Israel for decades, — and from [Canada](https://www.cjpme.org/pr_2023_06_12_arms_exports), [Germany](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2303_at_fact_sheet_2022_v2.pdf), [Italy](https://pagellapolitica.it/articoli/commercio-armi-italia-israele), the [United Kingdom](https://caat.org.uk/news/statement-on-uk-arms-exports-to-israel/) (UK), and the [Netherlands](https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/11/07/nederland-blijft-israel-f35-onderdelen-leveren-ondanks-waarschuwing-schending-oorlogsrecht-a4180072) — States Parties to the ATT —, has continued, in  flagrant violation of  Articles 6 and 7 of the treaty.

We remind that States parties to the ATT have binding obligations and clear prohibitions under the  treaty in regards to transfer of arms, particularly under article 6 and 7;  and under relevant regional and national legal instruments on arms control.  Furthermore, under human rights law and International Humanitarian Law, all States have obligations of regulation of arms transfers. We recall that providing arms or military support to Israel may make exporting and transit States complicit in its actions.

ATT  States parties need to take concrete actions to hold accountable those who blatantly violate the treaty and to impose a two-way arms embargo, including transit, on Israel - no buying, no selling and no transiting. Pending such an embargo, all States must immediately suspend all transfers of military items and associated services and assistance to Israel. ATT States Parties must immediately terminate current, and prohibit future transfers to Israel of conventional arms, munitions, parts and components referred to in Articles 2(1), 3 and 4 of the ATT. States must also refrain from concluding any military cooperation agreements, including military training and intelligence operational cooperation, which could implicate them in international crimes and other serious violations of international law. Finally, transit States should refuse to have their ports and airports used for transferring arms to Israel.

The original purpose of the ATT  –to prevent human suffering– needs to be at the centre of all efforts. Despite 10 years of its entry into force, we are witnessing the ATT  have been severely and systematically violated by countries who are providing weapons that are enabling genocide and other international crimes. This needs to stop now.

Thank you.