

**Eighth Conference of State Parties, Geneva, Switzerland 22-26 August 2022.**

**General Debate**

**General Statement by Ambassador Dr. Omar Awadallah**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates**

**The State of Palestine**

**Mr President, Ambassador Thomas Gobel,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The State of Palestine congratulates you on your designation as President of the 8th conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty, and expresses its appreciation to you for leading our efforts in a transparent and effective manner.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts in preparing for this conference, our appreciation also goes to the Management Committee, the Bureau members, the Working Group Chairs and the Sub-Groups Facilitators. Their efforts are instrumental to the success of work.

We also wish to welcome the Philippines for joining the treaty.

**Mr. President,**

The irresponsible trade of conventional arms leads to a needless human and economic cost and dangerously threatens international peace and security. These weapons are most often the pivotal means of conflicts, leading directly to a large number of victims every year. Putting an end to irresponsible arms trade has been acknowledged as a key element in conflict prevention, upholding international law, and for saving lives.

For the ATT to be effective , it must provide for a sustained integrated and collaborative approach towards addressing irresponsible arms trade, as well as ensuring that accountable and transparent arms export control systems are in place.

Our meetings should amplify discussions of concrete cases of arms transfer authorization and thus enable us to learn from one another and establish best practices.

The ATT can make difference in many nations' lives, including in the lives of the Palestinian people; it has the potential, if it is implemented in good faith, to spare lives including those of women and children, and to spare humanity needless suffering.

In this respect, we wish to highlight the lack of adherence to the treaty in several situations, including as it relates to Palestine.

The most recent aggression on our people in Gaza illustrates beyond a shadow of doubt that putting an end to irresponsible arms trade is of the utmost importance.

This recent onslaught, like all four previous Israeli aggressions on Gaza, violated basic tenets of international humanitarian law, namely proportionality, distinction and precautions in attack, and was an act of collective punishment.

Here we must highlight that these aggressions do not happen in a vacuum. They must be placed and understood in the larger framework of the Israel's prolonged illegal colonial occupation of the Palestinian people. And they are enabled and fuelled by the inflow of weapons and ammunition. States supplying the means by which wars are fought bear major responsibility in this regard.

In this regard, we welcome the Open Letter sent to ATT States Parties, undersigned on 3 Aug 2021 by a global coalition of 245 leaders –from civil society, academia, the arts, media, business, politics, indigenous and faith communities, and people of conscience around the world– calling upon States Parties to act decisively to put an end to Israel's notorious use of arms and military equipment for the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights against Palestinian civilians by immediately imposing a comprehensive two-way arms embargo on Israel.

**Mr. President,**

The relevant rules of the ATT provide for this action. States Parties have legal obligations to put an end to irresponsible and often complicit trade of conventional arms that undermines international peace and security, facilitates commission of egregious crimes, and threatens the international legal order.

Here we recall that the States Parties undertook not to authorize any transfer of conventional arms if they have knowledge at the time of authorization that arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva conventions of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes as defined by international agreements to which they are a Party.

Under Articles 7 and 11, they undertook not to authorize any export of conventional arms, munitions, parts and components that would, inter alia, undermine peace and security or be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Arms exports to Israel are inconsistent with these obligations. Consistently, Israel has shown that it uses arms to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, as documented by countless United Nations bodies and civil society organizations worldwide. Military exports to Israel also clearly enabled, facilitated and maintained Israel's decades-long illegal colonial and apartheid regime imposed over the Palestinian people as a whole.

Similarly, arms imports from Israel are wholly inconsistent with obligations under the ATT. Israeli military and industry sources openly boast that their weapons and technologies are “combat proven” – in other words, field-tested on Palestinian civilians “human test subjects”. Importing from Israel is a direct encouragement for it to continue on with such practice.

It is thus abundantly clear that imposing a two-way arms embargo on Israel is both a legal and a moral obligation.

**Mr. President,**

We hope that the decisions taken at this conference will advance the implementation of the treaty and realize its full potential in maintaining international peace and security.

**Thank you**