



State of Palestine
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates

Sixth Conference of State Parties, Geneva, 17-21 August 2020

General Debate

General Statement by Ambassador Ammar Hijazi
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The State of Palestine

Mr. President, Ambassador Federico VILLEGAS
Excellences

The State of Palestine congratulates you on your designation as the President of the 6^h conference of the States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty, and expresses its appreciation for leading our efforts in a transparent and effective manner.

We would also like to extend our congratulations to the Secretariat for its excellent preparation for this conference, our appreciation goes further to the Management Committee, the Bureau members, the Working Group Chairs and the Sub-Groups Facilitators. Their efforts are instrumental for leading our conference to tangible results.

Mr. President,

The global health crisis posed by the COVID -19 highlighted the urgency of reconsidering the notion of 'security', our security is not achieved by spending billions on weapons of mass destruction and robot killers, but by investing in health system and education sector. For years, worldwide, billions have been spent on militarization, while health care and education have been neglected.

The State of Palestine regrets that several states decided continue to press on with arms deals with other states, including states that have a long history of war crimes and crimes against humanity, despite international shortages of masks, ventilators and protective equipment's.



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Mr. President,

The State of Palestine welcomes and congratulates Namibia, Maldives, China, Afghanistan, São Tomé and Príncipe and Niue for joining the treaty. The State of Palestine supports all outreach activities to promote the universalization of the ATT leading to a progressive growth in the number of states to 110 States. However, the State of Palestine recalls its concern that a number of major arms exporters and importers are not yet party to the treaty and calls upon them to do so, as responsible arms transfers represents a humanitarian imperative and is an essential step towards maintaining international peace and security.

In this regard, the State of Palestine encourages considering the MENA region as a priority when conducting universalization activities for the CSP6 and the CSP7 processes. We had the honor to coordinate a meeting between the President of the fifth conference of states parties and official representatives of many states in our region, and stand ready to contribute towards universalizing the treaty in our region.

Palestine believes that States Parties must be Ambassadors of the treaty; they must be the role model in putting an end to irresponsible trade of conventional arms that undermines international peace and security and facilitates commission of egregious crimes and threaten the international legal order.

Mr. President,

Arms control and disarmament education is an important factor in advancing the universalization of the treaty, whereas media has a crucial role in promoting **favorable public opinion** towards the ATT's humanitarian purpose. Therefore, Palestine supports considering **new areas of activities to towards** Universalization, including utilizing media and education for advocating and promoting the treaty.

In this context, Parliamentarians worldwide can play a crucial role in the universalization of the ATT. As elected representatives, and once equipped with the necessary knowledge, they can advance universalization activities with their constituency and within their respective countries.



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Mr. President,

Annual Reports are one of the main methods for transparency and building confidence at our disposal. Reporting on implementation should reflect accurate and comprehensive data, as well as compliance, inconsistencies and gaps. Reporting the total number of each weapon type without stating final exporting or importing countries, is not sufficient to determine compliance.

Mr. President,

Arms trade with countries violating human rights constitutes an internationally wrongful act. States and corporates responsibility for aiding or assisting the commitment of International Crimes is a crucial issue that all states Parties should bear in mind in implementing the treaty. In fact the *raison d'être* of the treaty is establishing the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms.

Mr. President,

The State of Palestine, is neither a manufacturer nor large importer of conventional weapons, and in spite of the difficulties our people and country is going through due to the Israel's illegal colonial occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine, we are keen in implementing all our duties and upholding our responsibilities concerning the ATT, including reporting and financial obligations. This is born from our conviction that rules based international order lead by multilateralism is the foundation of ensuring freedom, justice and peace for all.

The illegal Israeli occupation impedes Palestine's ability to fully exercise control over territory. In this regard, it is not possible to regulate transit, transshipment, or any arms brokering operations in the illegal settlements, military bases, and other facilities controlled by the occupying Power. The State of Palestine is not aware of the quantity and quality of imports of weapons to illegal



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Israeli settlements situated in the Occupied Territory of the State of Palestine and by settlers illegal transferred there.

The ATT can make difference in many nations' lives, including the Palestinian People; it has the potential, if it is implemented in a good faith, to spare countless potential protected persons, including women and children, from needless suffering.

As a State Party to the Arms Trade Treaty and many other international treaties, The State of Palestine will remain an active and engaged member of the international community.

We stand ready to contribute to a successful outcome of the Conference and to engage with other countries towards successful implementation and universalization of ATT.

Thank You