



Oral Statement on Sideline of Arms Trade Treaty Preparatory Meeting

Working Group on ATT Universality

Thank you, Mr. President

Maat expresses gratitude for the opportunity to discuss the challenges in strengthening the universality of Arms Trade Treaty in the Arab region, particularly in areas plagued by conflicts and armed confrontations.

Mr. President,

Weapons continue to wreak havoc on the lives of citizens in the Arab region. Poor control over the flow of weapons and ammunition has resulted in civilians paying the ultimate price. For instance, in Sudan, by the end of 2023, approximately 12,190 people lost their lives due to the conflict between Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudanese Armed Forces, which erupted in mid-April of the same year. Weapons transfer to both sides of conflict has significantly fueled acts of violence and killings. Similarly, arms smuggling operations have proliferated in Syria, Libya, and Yemen since 2011, leading to their acquisition by armed groups and terrorist organizations, resulting in gross human rights violations.

Despite ongoing conflicts in the Arab region, only three Arab countries (Palestine, Lebanon, and Mauritania) have joined ATT. Several challenges contribute to this situation, including a lack of awareness regarding the potential benefits of ATT, legal complexities, and inadequate preparedness of personnel to implement ATT's obligations. Additionally, League of Arab States has not fulfilled its role in encouraging member states to join ATT.

A common factor behind these challenges, and a significant reason for some countries not joining ATT, is the insufficient support provided to civil society organizations, both in technical and financial aspects. These organizations play a crucial role in raising awareness about ATT provisions and advocating for countries to join.

In this context, Maat has launched the "Regulate Death Trade: Towards an Effective Implementation of Arms Trade Treaty" initiative, which aims to enhance ATT universality, raise awareness about its provisions, and encourage countries, particularly in Middle East and North Africa region, to join. It calls upon all Treaty parties and civil society organizations to engage in consultations, share experiences, and exchange information to promote ATT universality.

Therefore, Maat recommends providing support and assistance to civil society organizations to effectively fulfill their role in raising awareness about ATT. This includes offering technical and financial support to enable them to engage with stakeholders in meetings and dialogues aimed at enhancing ATT universality in Middle East and North Africa region.