**Second Statement**

**The Decline in Compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty in the Arab region**

**Thank you, Mr. President.**

Irresponsible arms transfers fuel violations of international humanitarian law, particularly war crimes and crimes against humanity, This occurs in conflict zones and armed conflicts, including the occupied Palestinian territories, Sudan, and Syria.

In this context, it should be noted that the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as the signatory states such as the United States and some European countries, continue to transfer military equipment and ammunition to the Israeli occupation forces despite clear evidence of their crimes of killing civilians and indiscriminate attacks on civilian objects, which constitute war crimes. They also failed to take into account the International Court of Justice's reference to the possibility of genocide in Gaza, which violates Articles 6 and 7 of the Arms Trade Treaty. It is worth noting that more than 62,975 people have been killed in this conflict in the Gaza Strip, including 18,792 children and 12,400 women, and the number is increasing.

Among the European countries that have joined the treaty, Maat found that only the government of Slovenia has completely banned the export, import, and transit of military equipment to and from Israel. A number of other countries have partially banned arms exports to the Israeli occupation forces. This is a good step in any case, but Maat demands that a complete ban be imposed on arms exports to the Israeli occupation forces until they cease their genocidal operations in the Gaza Strip.

Conversely, although Article 11 of the treaty requires States Parties to take measures to prevent the diversion of conventional arms, whether through exports, transit, transshipment, or import, some estimates indicate that weapons are being diverted to the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan, which uses them to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly by countries such as Serbia and France, which are parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

The 116 States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty must take urgent measures to prevent the diversion of arms to countries with a history of supplying arms to areas of armed conflict where war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law regularly occur. They must conduct careful risk assessments before approving any arms deal, taking into account their history of arms diversion and their compliance with international law. The results of these assessments must be made publicly available, as far as possible, to ensure transparency and accountability.

Regarding the current escalation of the situation in Syria, Maat has numerous concerns regarding the irresponsible flow of weapons and ammunition to various parties within Syrian territory, including Bedouin tribal forces in Suwaida and some local elements affiliated with members of the Druze community. These parties primarily receive weapons from the Israeli occupation government and the current Syrian government, leading to an escalation of violence and deadly clashes with sectarian dimensions, threatening peace and security within Syria. There is also a renewed risk that these weapons could fall into the hands of terrorist movements or armed groups, which may use them to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Given the grave and ongoing human rights risks posed by the continued uncontrolled flow of weapons and ammunition into Syria, all States Parties and signatories to the Arms Trade Treaty must immediately cease all arms and ammunition supplies to Syria, given the looming humanitarian crisis that could result in the deaths of a large number of civilians.

Finally, Maat recommends that States Parties and signatories to the treaty conduct a thorough risk assessment prior to each export transaction, taking into account the security and humanitarian conditions in the importing countries, as well as their history of arms diversion to countries experiencing armed conflict. This is to ensure that these weapons do not reach irresponsible parties who may use them to violate human rights and endanger the lives of civilians.

**Thank you!**