

Madam President, delegations, colleagues from civil society,

Truth Hounds is a Ukrainian organisation documenting and investigating international crimes from 2014 – a significant share of which are committed using firearms.

While Ukraine has only signed the Arms Trade Treaty, it remains one of the most important states for its universalisation: a country actively engaged in the arms trade, and one that has endured international armed conflict for the past 14 years.

Ukrainian civil society, including Truth Hounds, is actively engaged in consultations with the government on potential ratification of the ATT, or at minimum, harmonisation of provisions within its national legislation. We would like to thank the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation for their support in this mission.

In our view, two directions are of particular importance for Ukraine.

First, the regulation of Ukraine's own arms imports and exports. Ukraine was historically an arms exporter. Over the past four years, it has become a major importer — and in the future, Ukraine may again become one of the world's largest arms exporters again. Civil society sees real value in joining the 118 states that have already ratified the Convention, in adopting transparent rules on trade and reporting, and in participating in forums like this one to help shape policy on the arms trade. While there are certain challenges with implementation of the treaty in domestic legislation, we are confident that the experience and support of states that have already ratified the Convention would be an important contribution.

Second, halting the flow of weapons and components to systemic violators of IHL and IHRL, like the Russian Federation. As civil society documenting war crimes and crimes against humanity, including conflict-related sexual violence, we are especially invested in stopping the supply of arms or components to Russia.

At a time when a UN Security Council arms embargo is paralysed by the veto of permanent members, Article 6(3) of the ATT, which prohibits arms transfers where there is knowledge they would be used to commit international crimes, is a vital tool, for Ukraine and for other states. Universal adherence to the Treaty is therefore key to its global impact, and to cutting off supply routes to states that grossly violate international humanitarian law.

We also call on ATT member states – particularly European states whose components are found daily in Russian weapons striking Ukrainian cities and civilians – to close these gaps.

Thank you.