



**Twelfth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
(Geneva, 24-28 August 2025)
General statement**

Madam President,

Let me start by expressing the full support of my delegation to you, Ambassador TSHEOLE, in fulfilling your duties as President of this Twelfth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Belgium aligns itself fully with the statement made by the Representative of the European Union and would like to add a couple of points in its national capacity.

To begin with, we warmly congratulate Ecuador and Vanuatu for joining the Treaty and welcome them in the ATT community.

Madam President,

The ongoing conflicts we are witnessing today constitute a critical test for this Treaty. As we speak, the civilian death toll in Ukraine resulting from Russia's indiscriminate strikes has reached its highest level in four years. So-called "human safaris" and daily attacks on urban centres by Russian drones and missiles continue unabated. We recall that "Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups" feature prominently in the United Nations Secretary-General's report on Children and Armed Conflict, published in June this year. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, issued in April 2026, documents a pattern of sexual violence perpetrated by Russian forces in temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine and within the Russian Federation itself, including against Ukrainian prisoners of war. Our assessment remains unchanged: pursuant to Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty, no State Party to the Arms Trade Treaty should authorize the transfer of arms, ammunition, or related parts and components to the Russian Federation.

In the Middle East, developments in Gaza and the West Bank remain deeply alarming, particularly in light of the catastrophic humanitarian situation and the continued forced displacement of Palestinian civilians. Belgium calls for the full respect of the ceasefire, as well as for immediate, sustained, and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza. Belgium reiterates that all parties must fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and must duly implement the rulings and provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice. Furthermore, the report of the United Nations Secretary-General previously referred to documents patterns of conflict-related sexual violence against Palestinians detained in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Since 2009, Belgium and its Regions have maintained a policy of not authorizing arms exports that could strengthen the military capabilities of parties involved in this conflict. This policy remains in force. In light of the serious concerns outlined above, Belgium calls on all States Parties to take these elements fully into account when assessing and granting export licences for transfers to Israel.

Madam President,

Regarding the implementation of the Treaty, the development of an ATT Strategy provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on our priorities for the years ahead. We are grateful to the Secretariat for its draft proposals, which constitute a useful basis for discussion. However, further work is required to refine the strategic direction and identify the priorities on which we wish to focus.

Finally, Belgium would like to take this opportunity to recall the obligation of all States Parties to submit their annual reports in a timely manner and, whenever possible, to make them publicly available. Regrettably, this year, as in the previous one, witnessed a record low rate of annual report submissions.

Belgium fully recognizes that the current international security environment may lead some States Parties to refrain from disclosing certain details concerning their arms transfers. Nevertheless, in the interest of transparency and the effective implementation of the Treaty, we would encourage States Parties to make use of the flexibility provided under Article 13(3) of the ATT, which allows specific transaction data to be withheld where necessary, while still ensuring the submission of an annual report and, whenever feasible, with a non-confidential status.

I thank you Madam President.