control arms

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First Committee on Disarmament and International Security

Statement on the International Arms Trade
Delivered by Ms. Raluca Muresan
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(Time limit - 3 minutes)

I am honoured to speak today on behalf of Control Arms, a global coalition that works to prevent the human suffering caused by poorly regulated arms transfers.

In 2025, we witnessed 65 state-based conflicts, the highest number since 1946. Some 245,000 people were killed in battle-related violence, making it the third most violent year since the end of the Cold War.[1] Civilians were also targeted directly: over 76,000 people were killed in one-sided violence, the highest number since the genocide in Rwanda.[2] At the same time, military expenditure rose for the eleventh consecutive year to almost US$2.9 trillion, and the volume of major arms transferred between States from 2021 to 2025 reached its highest level in more than three decades.[3]

Many of the weapons fuelling these conflicts were transfers that a government represented in this room had approved.

This Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013 for precisely these types of decisions. Article 6 prohibits transfers where a State knows the arms would be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Article 7 requires States to assess, before export, whether arms could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law, including serious acts of gender-based violence, and to refuse the export where that risk is overriding.

Over the past year, several States, including States Parties, have suspended or restricted transfers to parties to armed conflict. We welcome those decisions. Yet very few were explicitly linked to the ATT. When a State halts a transfer in silence, the ATT becomes invisible at the very moment it is meeting its object and purpose: to reduce human suffering. Other States cannot learn from those decisions. They cannot see whether and how international law, including obligations under the ATT, and commitments such as the Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, actually shape arms transfer decisions. And the communities

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[1] Rustad, Siri Aas (2026) Conflict trends: A global overview, 1946–2025. PRIO Paper. Oslo: PRIO.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Lopes da Silva, Diego; Nan Tian; Xiao Liang; Lorenzo Scarazzato; Jade Guiberteau Ricard & Zubaida A. Karim (2026) Military expenditure. Chapter 5 in SIPRI Yearbook 2026: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. Oxford: Oxford University Press. See also Wezeman, Siemon T.; Katarina Djokic; Mathew George; Zain Hussain & Pieter D. Wezeman (2026) International arms transfers. Chapter 7 in SIPRI Yearbook 2026: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

impacted by conflict and armed violence cannot see that the commitments made in their name are being kept.

Our call today is concrete. We urge States Parties to make their application of ATT Articles 6 and 7 clear, to state publicly when the Treaty informs a decision to deny, suspend or restrict a transfer, to apply the same criteria to allies as to anyone else, and to report on arms transfers fully, publicly and on time. We also urge every State that has not yet joined the Treaty, including major exporters, to do so without delay.

The people who live with the consequences of these decisions will never sit in this room. They are owed proof that the rules this Assembly has created over 10 years ago, are being applied.

Thank you, Chair