

STATEMENT

# Statement by the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC) at the 10th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT CSP10)

I am honored to speak on behalf of the representatives of the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC), a broad and diverse network of women peacebuilders, security officials, grassroots civil society and women's rights groups, and disarmament experts. We are honored to address this esteemed group to highlight the importance of ensuring a gendered perspective as related to the trade and transfer of arms to ensure they do not exacerbate the large - and differentiated - impact of small arms and light weapons on women and girls.

We are deeply concerned about the devastating role that small arms and light weapons play in perpetuating violence against women and girls. The arms trade is a critical global issue that can intensify violence against women and girls in all settings when managed irresponsibly and when gender is not accounted for. The diversion of arms from the licit to the illicit market puts lives in danger. It is well documented that recent conflicts have exacerbated illicit arms proliferation and increased levels of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Even in places considered to be "at-peace," women frequently are at the greatest risk in their own homes, making up the overwhelming majority of victims of intimate partner violence with illicitly circulating weapons frequently used as tools of violence and coercion.

As outlined in the recently released report of the Pathfinders Halving Global Violence Task Force, which GENSAC was pleased to contribute to, the impacts of armed violence go beyond physical harm, leading to severe economic and social consequences. These consequences deepen gender inequalities and perpetuate cycles of violence, significantly hindering efforts toward sustainable peace and development.

We are pleased to see positive steps towards incorporating gender into international instruments, such as Article 7.4 of the ATT, The Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management, and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons that stress the importance of building on this positive momentum and harmonizing across these treaties and processes, as well as across agencies, in line with this year's Conference of State Parties theme of interagency coordination. This must include efforts to ensure ATT implementation and the Women, Peace, and Security frameworks are seen as mutually reinforcing and engage stakeholders across national and domestic agencies, as well as with civil society, national women's organizations, the private sector, and international organizations. Gender mainstreaming will improve implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and limit the risks posed to all societies from the misuse of small arms.

Finally, we wish to call attention to the fact that women are still too often excluded from policies and processes designed to limit harm that can be associated with small arms. Guaranteeing the full, equal, meaningful, and effective participation of women in decision-making and implementation processes will ultimately yield better results for all people.

### **Recommendations**

In light of these realities, GENSAC urgently calls for bold and decisive action to address the intersection of diversion of licit arms, small arms misuse, and gender inequality. As such, we urge states parties to the ATT to prioritize the following actions:

1. Enforce provisions in the ATT, including article 7.4, that prevent the transfer of weapons to contexts where they are likely to illicitly circulate and be misused, whether by state or non-state actors, including but not limited to the commission of sexual and gender-based violence, and take these factors into account in their export risk assessments.
2. Ensure equal opportunities for women's participation in political decision-making, policy formulation, and implementation of measures related to the Arms Trade Treaty and related efforts to curb small arms proliferation, including by increasing women's meaningful involvement in security processes.
3. Seek to enhance interagency coordination and collaboration on issues related to small arms trade and transfer, including by better linking ATT implementation and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.
4. Provide local and national civil society organizations (CSOs), including women's organizations, with sufficient civic space, information, and financial resources to effectively engage in public oversight and advocacy on small arms issues, including by incorporating their perspectives into decisions related to small arms trade and transfers.
5. Encourage and support the learning and sharing of best practices between civil society from different regions and countries as related to the efforts to control the illicit trade of small arms.



6. Provide international cooperation and assistance to improve data collection mechanisms to gather gender-disaggregated data on the impact of small arms proliferation and misuse on women and girls as to inform arms transfers and the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

7. Ensure that decisions related to arms trade practices are designed with strong gender-sensitive frameworks, taking into account women's lived experiences, and leveraging technology to enhance their efficacy.

On this tenth anniversary of the ATT, we have seen the ways in which this admirable instrument can advance global peace and security, as well as the ways in which implementation has fallen short. On behalf of women and girls who are suffering from illicitly circulating small arms - and all those who suffer from the misuse of weapons - we urge all of those present to continue to uphold and strengthen the implementation of the ATT by ensuring a gender perspective is an integral part of all related policies and efforts.

Thank you, President.

