

**Statement by Mr. Qais Kasabri, Counsellor, State of Palestine, under the thematic debate on Conventional Weapons, 24 October 2022**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and by Iraq on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Palestine always emphasizes the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, but one must not forget that it is conventional weapons that continue to kill most civilians around the world.

Some of these weapons are by essence indiscriminate and therefore are themselves illegal. The use of others in an indiscriminate or disproportionate manner must also be deemed unlawful.

The State of Palestine stresses once again that its overall approach to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is guided by the need to uphold international law, notably international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to ensure, in particular, the protection of civilians in all circumstances.

It has thus spared no effort to be an active and constructive actor internationally to advance these goals, including by being a strong advocate for prohibiting and eliminating certain weapons, and regulating the use of others. As such, the State of Palestine has acceded to all relevant instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction and banning or regulating relevant conventional weapons.

The State of Palestine has joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, as well as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and relevant protocols, informed by the suffering of our own people from these weapons.

The State of Palestine is also a State Party to the ATT and reminds all states parties to the treaty of their obligation under articles 6 and 7 respectively not to authorize any transfer of conventional arms if they could be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, nor authorize exports of these weapons if they would undermine peace and security or could be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law or of international human rights law.

The State of Palestine has undertaken these steps motivated both by its commitment to international law and by its wish to end the suffering endured by the Palestinian people as a result

of the use of illegal weapons and the unlawful use of conventional weapons by Israel, the occupying Power, and its armed settlers.

Mr. Chair,

The rapid development of autonomous weapons systems poses ethical, legal, humanitarian, moral, as well as international peace and security related challenges that require the urgent development of a legally binding instrument. The Joint Statement on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems delivered by Austria on behalf of 70 states, including the State of Palestine, recognizes these challenges, and the need to maintain human responsibility and accountability, and for internationally agreed rules and limits, including prohibitions and regulations.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Palestine welcomes the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas and commends Ireland for its exceptional leadership in this regard. The State of Palestine is proud to have participated in the elaboration of the declaration and has the honour to confirm it will be joining it this November. Our people, especially in the Gaza Strip, understand better than anyone the need for such a declaration and, more importantly, the need for its implementation.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, the State of Palestine stresses once again the need for a more holistic approach to security that can be best served not by an arms race but by ensuring human security. In this sense, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control enhance security. They also allow to devote these resources to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. When we speak of the international law-based order, we can not but place disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control at its heart. And if we want to advance and preserve this order, much more needs to be done in this regard. The State of Palestine stands ready to do its share and work with all delegations to advance this aim.

Thank you Mr. Chair.