

BELGIUM

Statements for debates in thematic clusters

Cluster IV – Conventional Weapons

1st Committee of the 80th UN General Assembly

New York, October 2025

Cluster IV – Conventional Weapons

Mister Chair,

Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU and wishes to offer the following remarks in its national capacity.

Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is a requirement for the use of arms in conflict and, thus, an essential pillar for arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation. IHL is also a crucial component of the rules-based international order. Unfortunately, IHL is presently under severe pressure. It is eroded by massive and brutal violations, but also by undermining political rhetoric, and by direct political attacks against the institutions that underpin it, like the International Criminal Court. Belgium will continue to defend the integrity of IHL and underline its role in arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation.

Belgium fully supports the Secretary-General's campaign to strengthen global mine action. As the first country to ban anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, Belgium remains committed to humanitarian disarmament and defending the international norms against the use of these weapons.

Controlling trade in military and dual-use goods is a responsibility for each state and vital in order to prevent powerful weapons from being developed by proliferators, or transferred to criminals or terrorists. The Arms Trade Treaty and multilateral export control regimes are indispensable tools and merit this Committee's full support.

In addition to the erosion of the rules-based order, we are witnessing rapid technological advances with military applications—including artificial intelligence, quantum technology and biotechnology. These technologies have an enormous potential to benefit humanity and project a better future, but they also pose existential risks. This Committee allows us to enter into dialogue to address these risks and promote responsible development.

Belgium advocates for human accountability in the development, deployment, and use of military artificial intelligence and autonomous weapon systems. Decisions involving the use of force must remain under meaningful human control. We remain convinced of the need for urgent action on this issue, as has been articulated by the UN Secretary-General and the President of the ICRC, and reaffirmed in the Pact for the Future. Given the maturity of the discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon

Systems, we are convinced that any remaining differences can be resolved in the context of subsequent negotiations on an instrument.

To strengthen the international norms created by the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons protocols I and IV, Belgium proposed amendments to the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court, the so called Rome Statute, labelling all use of weapons with the primary effect to injure by fragments undetectable by X-rays in the human body and blinding laser weapons as war crimes. We call on all ICC States Parties to ratify these amendments outlawing some of the most inhumane methods of warfare.

Thank you.
