

UNGA80 First Committee – General Debate October 10th 2025

Statement of Iceland

**By Aðalheiður Inga Þorsteinsdóttir, Director for Arms Control,
Disarmament and Non-Proliferation**

Mr Chair,

Iceland refers to the statement already delivered on behalf of the Nordic countries. I will use this opportunity to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Several countries have raised the corrosive effect that Russia's unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine has had on the international system, including the stability of the arms control and disarmament structures developed over decades. Russia – a permanent member of the Security Council – has not only violated the fundamental principles of the UN Charter but a variety of international obligations and norms, including the Chemical Weapons Convention through the use of riot-control agents as a method of warfare, through endangering nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and threatening the use of nuclear force.

Russia's war against Ukraine must end now, primarily for the sake of Ukrainians, but also for the sake of the integrity of our international system.

The same can be said of the devastating war in Gaza. The scale of the humanitarian catastrophe, and the fact that we have been witnessing what appears to be systematic ethnic cleansing, reflects a failure of the international system and, frankly, a disgrace for humanity.

Iceland has consistently condemned the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas in October 2023, demanded the release of all hostages and recognised Israel's right to defend itself. We have also expressed outrage at Israel's treatment of the Palestinian population in Gaza. Nothing can justify the mass killing of civilians, man-made famine and forced displacement.

Iceland commends the efforts of the United States together with Egypt, Qatar and others to bring peace. We welcome the significant progress made in the last few days and express sincere hope that it will result in a permanent cessation of hostilities. The next steps must lead to a process towards just and lasting peace, based on the two-state solution.

Mr. Chair,

Russia's unprovoked and illegal aggression has forced countries in Europe to strengthen their defence and deterrence, and therefore vastly increase military and defence-related expenditures. Iceland, a country with no military forces that has never engaged in hostilities, is not excluded. We would all prefer to use these resources differently – to promote development and improve people's

lives – but Russia’s hostile actions leave us no choice. Its war is ultimately to the detriment of stability and prosperity across the globe.

The threats to peace and security that we are facing are interrelated and we all have a shared interest in upholding the global frameworks for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The viability of this architecture depends on full implementation and compliance. If those who violate international obligations are not held accountable, we risk an erosion of norms and commitments. It is imperative that we cooperate in good faith to curb such trends and preserve the instruments that have served to keep us safer and more secure.

Mr. Chair,

Iceland reiterates its support for effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and for the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in disarmament fora.

Despite the multiple challenges to global peace and security that have set the tone for our discussions, allow me to close on a hopeful note. The essence of our role as diplomats is to retain faith in the possibility of finding common solutions and overcoming what seem like insurmountable obstacles. We can and we must work together to strengthen multilateralism and ensure that the United Nations not only prevail but are fit for purpose.

Iceland welcomes the UN80 Initiative and supports efforts to make the organisation's work more efficient and effective, including the work of the First Committee. We stress our commitment to protecting and upholding the global frameworks for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.