

Statement of the State of Palestine, delivered by Councilor Qais Kasabri at the General Debate of the first committee, 80th.

Mr. Chair,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on assuming the Chair of the First Committee this session. The State of Palestine places full confidence in your stewardship and reaffirms its commitment to supporting the successful work of this Committee.

The State of Palestine associates itself with the statements of the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Palestine reiterates that, only adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and to international law, remains the indispensable foundation of international peace and security.

The possession, use, or threat of use of Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction under any circumstances constitutes a grave breach of the fundamental principles of international law.

We reaffirm that the only durable remedy to the threat posed by nuclear weapons, is their complete and verifiable elimination. Nuclear Weapons states and Nuclear-armed States bear a special responsibility for our collective security and must take concrete, time-bound, and transparent steps toward dismantling their arsenals rather than expanding or modernizing them.

Mr. Chair,

While weapons of mass destruction pose existential threats to humanity, the immediate and catastrophic humanitarian toll of conventional weapons specially when used in populated areas demands urgent attention. Explosive weapons in all its forms have been shown to cause the vast majority of civilian casualties. Their effects, and the systemic damage they inflict on innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure is catastrophic. A Genocide can be perpetrated by using conventional weapons when employed in unconventional manners.

In Gaza, the consequences of sustained use of explosives in densely populated areas have been devastating: extremely high civilian casualty figures; widespread injury and trauma; the destruction of vital civilian infrastructure; and mass internal displacement. These are the horrifying consequences to the intensive use of explosive weapons by the Israeli war machine. When such conventional weapons are employed indiscriminately or in disregard of IL, their effects become mass-scale in both scope and severity; in human terms, they function as weapons of mass destruction.

We are further alarmed by the humanitarian and legal implications of integrating advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, into military surveillance, targeting, and strike systems specially when rigorous human review and control are not guaranteed. As we have witnessed the horror of its use in Gaza, AI-assisted systems including Autonomous Weapons Systems can accelerate targeting cycles, generate expansive target lists, and heighten the risk of misidentification and disproportionate harm to civilians. The State of Palestine underscores that meaningful human control must be preserved over the use of force at all times, and that any employment of AI in the Military Domaine must be governed by strict legal, ethical, and operational safeguards with transparent accountability.

In this vein, we support the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapon systems that: (1) prohibits systems that cannot be subject to meaningful human control and all systems designed to target persons; and (2) establishes positive obligations and regulations on all other systems to ensure effective human judgement, predictability, and accountability.

Mr. Chair,

The establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a priority of profound regional and global significance. The United Nations conference mandated by General Assembly decision 73/546 has already convened five sessions, adopting rules of procedure, establishing working committee and modalities, and issuing outcome reports that reflect constructive engagement. We look forward to the sixth session, to be held in New York next month under the Presidency of the Kingdom of Morocco, and we commend the progress achieved thus far in consolidating this conference as an inclusive, and consensus-based platform. Yet despite these important steps, the Conference cannot fulfil its mandate so long as **the only nuclear-armed State in the region continues to remain outside the process, has not acceded to the NPT, and refuses to place its nuclear facilities under full-scope of IAEA safeguards.** This persistent refusal defies repeated UN resolutions, including the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and prevents the realization of the zone, which is an integral part of the package deal that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT. Universal participation is therefore indispensable. The State of Palestine continues to engage in good faith so that the Conference can agree on a legally binding treaty. We call upon the international community to provide sustained support for this process and to urge the only non-participant to join without delay, so that the Middle East may finally be freed from the threat of nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mr. Chair,

With respect to outer space, the State of Palestine stresses the necessity of preserving the exclusively peaceful use of this domain. Preventing an arms race in outer space must be treated as a priority. We support multilateral negotiations toward a legally binding treaty that prohibits military activities, protects civilian and scientific assets, establishes norms of responsible behavior.

Mr. Chair,

We believe that Security built on armaments is fleeting; lasting security is built on law, justice, development, and cooperation.

I Thank you,