

**Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran
at the First Committee's Thematic Discussion on
"regional disarmament and security"**

25 October 2016

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

I associate myself with the statement by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

Today, the security situation in our volatile region, the Middle East, is more tense, complicated and appalling.

The first, oldest and chronic security problem of this region is the nuclear weapons of the Israeli regime, which not only threatens the peace and security of the region and beyond, but also is the only obstacle for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Despite over 40 years of international efforts, today there is no hope for the establishment of this zone due only to the stubborn objections of the Israeli regime, which is the only non-NPT party in the region.

The inability of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to adopt a final document was mainly due to pressure of this regime. Therefore, not only for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, but also for upholding the authority and relevance of the NPT, the Israeli regime must be compelled to accede, as a non-nuclear weapon party and without any condition or further delay, to the NPT.

Another source of great concern is the possession of other weapons of mass destruction and a large arsenal of sophisticated conventional weapons by the Israeli regime. Given the dark record of this regime in invading all its neighbours, waging over 15 wars and invading even countries beyond the region, its accession to all treaties banning weapons of mass destruction is the main and urgent prerequisite for preserving peace and security in the Middle East.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq by the terrorist group, Daesh, in recent years has also aggravated the already tense security situation in the Middle East. As the main victim of chemical weapons in the contemporary history, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. We also continue to assist affected people as we did in the case of use of chemical weapons by terrorists against Iraqi civilians.

Mr. Chairman,

Certain oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf have almost always been among the major arms importing countries. However, their excessive accumulation of sophisticated weapons has been increased manifold in recent years as a result of unprecedented arms import by such countries.

Those weapons, mostly imported from western countries, were used by the U.S.-backed Saudi-led coalition in its 20-month aggression against Yemen, the latest atrocity of which was the deliberate bombing of a funeral gathering, killing at least 150 civilians and wounding over 500 others.

In short, Mr. Chairman, besides the threats of foreign terrorist fighters, threats of U.S.-backed regimes in Israel and Saudi Arabia, which both invaded their neighbours and kept peoples of Yemen and Gaza under a brutal siege, endangers the peace and security in the Middle East.

Therefore, to ease this situation, military aids and arms export to these regimes must be stopped and inhumane blockades against Yemen and Gaza strip have to be lifted.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, despite being surrounded and affected by such a situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to have one of the lowest levels of military expenditure in this region.

Likewise, as a party to all major treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, Iran continues to fulfil its respective obligations under such treaties. We also remain committed to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, proposed by Iran in 1974.

Iran will continue to seriously take its responsibility in contributing to the preservation of peace and security in this sensitive region and expects that others will be compelled to do likewise.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.