

# ISRAEL

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## FULL STATEMENT

Statement by  
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Thematic discussion on Conventional Weapons

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Mr. Chairperson,

The strategic situation in the Middle East has become ever more complex, uncertain and fragile in the course of the last several years. The Middle East, unfortunately, serves as a laboratory for terror activities where oppressive regimes, terrorist organizations and other non-state actors continue to wreak havoc in the region, already laden with instability and violent extremism. States in the region are characterized by weakened or sometimes failed governance, resulting in the partial or complete loss of control over territories and borders, making it a safe haven for terrorist groups and organized crime.

Mr. Chairperson,

While, naturally, international attention is largely focused on the use of non-conventional weapons, Israel regards the threat posed by conventional weapons and their proliferation as detrimental as these weapons are being acquired and proliferated in the region in unprecedented qualities and quantities. They are proliferated through various illicit routes and means, such as smuggling, transferring, looting and the ceding of territories in which arsenals were stored. Weapons, both conventional and unconventional, are used widely and deliberately against civilian populations and have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the Middle East and beyond. It should be recognized that in our region, some states not only fail to stop or curb the activities of terrorist organizations, they sometimes even encourage, support and back them, including through financing, training and the transfer of large quantities of sophisticated weapons, such as short and medium range rockets, missiles and MANPADS. In this context, it should be emphasized that Iran uses proxy organizations to inflict terror and engage in hostilities in an attempt to gain regional dominance. In some cases, such as Syria, the regime uses its weapons, including missiles and barrel bombs, against its own population. Unfortunately, suffering and misery, death and siege, loss of homes and wide scale displacement have become part of the everyday life of the region's inhabitants.

We are vigilant and determined to counter this growing peril in the region, both individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders. Strict implementation of UNSC resolutions, international norms and standards as well as national tools and mechanisms is required. An important normative basis already exists in the form of UNSC resolutions taken under Chapter 7, such as resolution 1373 of September 2001.

The threat posed by some weapons systems in the wrong hands, such as MANPADS, short range rockets, mortars and surface-to-air missiles, is immense and should not be disregarded. The devastating effects of these weapon systems have been clearly demonstrated in recent years, not only in the Middle East but in other regions of the world. These weapons systems, mainly MANPADS, have the potential to cause massive disastrous effects including on the civilian population. Such weapon systems should, therefore, only be in the hands of responsible sovereign states, which comply with the international norms and standards undertaken by them and which have, inter alia, strict stockpile management mechanisms in place. Special responsibility to prevent unauthorized proliferation and abuse lies with exporting states that transfer weapons to non-state actors and irresponsible states. Efforts to tackle this issue should be exercised both on the national, regional and international levels alike.

Mr. Chairperson,

The UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, including the Marking and Tracing Instrument (ITI), is an important instrument in combating the illicit trade and diversion of arms. Israel welcomes the successful outcome of BMS 6 that was held in New York in June 2016. The topics discussed, mainly international cooperation and effective implementation of the UNPoA and the ITI, are important to the effort to curb the Illicit Trade in Small arms and Light Weapons and their diversion. While the UNPoA recognizes the importance of implementation on the domestic level, it addresses at the same time the need to exert efforts on the regional and global spheres. Regional states who share vital interests should maintain open channels of communication and venues for regional cooperation to promote the PoA. In the Middle East we, unfortunately, sorely lack such venues. Their importance is clear, especially during these times. We look forward to continued deliberations, exchanges of views and enhanced cooperation on this issue.

Israel values the mechanism of the UN Register and submits its report annually. It is very unfortunate that in the Middle East region, Israel is almost alone in submitting annual reports and we urge other regional states to submit their reports.

Mr. Chairperson,

In this context, Israel acknowledges the significance of the Arms Trade Treaty as a substantial achievement of the international community. The ATT demonstrates the international community's commitment to promote regulation of the trade in arms, while taking into consideration that it is legitimate to acquire arms for self-defense, when traded under the right standards and norms. The second Conference of State parties that took place in Geneva in August included important exchanges and Israel was pleased to take part in this meeting. As a Signatory State, Israel supports the goals and purposes of the ATT. Many of the Treaty's principles and standards are already embodied in Israel's robust export policy and control mechanisms.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel considers the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to be an important instrument and the right forum for discussing many challenges in the conventional sphere, as it strives to strike the necessary balance between military necessity and humanitarian considerations in the application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Israel welcomes the work undertaken this year in the CCW and is looking forward to the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference to be held in December 2016. There are some issues that are due to be discussed, such as the IEDs, MOTAPM and especially LAWS which need to be further explored, from both technical and legal aspects. We believe the Review Conference would be an opportunity to engage in meaningful and substantive discussions and Israel is committed to doing so.

Thank you