Statement by Mr. Mohammad Hossein Ghaniei, Second Counselor, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
Before the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly
On Conventional Weapons
New York, 29 October 2018

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

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the NAM statement delivered by Indonesia.

One of the major challenges in the current decade, with respect to conventional weapons, is their overproduction and growing international transfer as well as their excessive accumulation in certain regions.

The overproduction of conventional weapons has adverse consequences on international peace and security. Therefore, States must act responsibly by reducing their production.

More importantly and given that, unfortunately, the transfer of such weapons has grown steadily since 2003, there must be a substantial limitation to their transfer as well.

This is much alarming in our region, the Middle East, where the security situation is already complicated.

For example, in addition to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, a large arsenal of sophisticated offensive conventional weapons of the Israeli regime continues to threaten the peace and security of the region and beyond.

Likewise, Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. To date, the United States has provided Israel with 134.7 billion dollars in bilateral assistance, almost all of which is in the form of military assistance. Under the terms of a new MOU covering 2019 to 2028, the United States has also pledged to provide 38 billion dollars in military aid to Israel. Such aids have been designed to maintain Israel’s so-called “qualitative military edge” over neighboring militaries.

These are the weapons that the Israeli regime uses systematically and vastly for killing civilians; to commit genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity; to violate basic norms, rules, regulations and principles of international humanitarian law; and to breach the principles of morality and humanity.
The number of Palestinian protestors killed by such weapons during the Great March of Return in Gaza, has exceeded 200 and the number of those injured surpassed 22,000. This included the inhumane and intentional killing of Razan Al-Najjar -- a 21-year-old Palestinian paramedic who was wearing “high visibility medical jackets” indicating that she is a medical personnel, thus obliging all not to target her.

Mr. Chairman,

In the recent decade, this situation in the Middle East has been exacerbated, including by manifold increases in the military budgets and arms imports by certain States in the Persian Gulf.

One example of this trend is the signing of a 110 billion dollar weapons deal by Saudi Arabia with the U.S. in 2017, which is yet separate from a ten-year, 350 billion dollar arms deal that this country signed separately with the U.S. Similarly, in recent years, the U.K. has authorized the export of 4.7 billion pound of arms to Saudi Arabia.

During the past three years, we have witnessed how the western made weapons have been used by Saudi Arabia to kill hundreds of thousands of civilians in Yemen. Such acts are in clear violation of international humanitarian law and represent clear examples of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Those countries that provide arms to Saudi Arabia are culpable in war crimes. They must stop such destabilizing transfers of arms.

This is only the tip of the submerged iceberg of the security situation, military expenditure and arms import in our region.

While Saudi Arabia is the world’s third-biggest military spender, Iran’s military budget is a small fraction of what is spent by its neighbors, which have a fraction of its territory or population to defend.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that we should work together towards reducing global military expenditure, responsible production and transfer of conventional weapons to meet the actual security needs of States.

In conclusion, I would like to introduce draft decision A/C.1/73/L.10 on “Missiles”, proposed jointly by Egypt, Indonesia and Iran and hope that, like previous years, it will be adopted without a vote.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.