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The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Heidar Ali **Balouji** (Islamic Republic of Iran)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 8 September 2023, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-eighth session the item entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” and to allocate it to the First Committee.

2. At its 1st meeting, on 28 September 2023, the First Committee decided to conduct its work in three phases. The first phase would be a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely items 90 to 106, as well as a general debate on the working methods of the Committee and programme planning, namely items 120 and 135; the second phase would be dedicated to thematic discussions; and the third phase would be for action on all draft proposals.

3. At its 2nd to 9th meetings, from 2 to 6 and from 9 to 11 October, the Committee held its general debate on items 90 to 106. At its 10th meeting, on 12 October, the Committee also held its general debate on items 120 and 135. On 13 October, at its 11th meeting, the Committee held exchanges with the Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, nominated by regional groups. The Committee also held 14 meetings (11th to 24th), on 13, from 16 to 20 and from 23 to 26 October, for thematic discussions and panel exchanges with independent experts. At those meetings, as well as during the action phase, draft resolutions and decisions were introduced and considered. The Committee took action on all draft resolutions and



decisions at its 25th to 30th meetings, on 27 October and from 30 October to 3 November.¹

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction ([A/78/81](#));

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East ([A/78/205 \(Part I\)](#));

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East ([A/78/205 \(Part II\)](#)).

II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.1/78/L.2](#)

5. On 2 October, the delegation of Egypt, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the League of Arab States, submitted a draft resolution entitled “The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East” ([A/C.1/78/L.2](#)).

6. At its 25th meeting, on 27 October, the Committee voted on draft resolution [A/C.1/78/L.2](#) as follows:

(a) The fifth preambular paragraph was retained by a recorded vote of 164 to 4, with 3 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan,

¹ For an account of the Committee's discussion of the item, see [A/C.1/78/PV.2](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.3](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.4](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.5](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.6](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.7](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.8](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.9](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.10](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.11](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.12](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.13](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.14](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.15](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.16](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.17](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.18](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.19](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.20](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.21](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.22](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.23](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.24](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.25](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.26](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.27](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.28](#), [A/C.1/78/PV.29](#) and [A/C.1/78/PV.30](#).

Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Israel, Pakistan.

Abstaining:

Bhutan, Papua New Guinea, United States of America.

(b) The sixth preambular paragraph was retained by a recorded vote of 165 to 4, with 3 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Israel, Pakistan.

Abstaining:

Bhutan, Papua New Guinea, United States of America.

(c) Draft resolution [A/C.1/78/L.2](#), as a whole, was adopted by a recorded vote of 148 to 6, with 28 abstentions (see para. 7). The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic

People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Australia, Belgium, Cameroon, Congo, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Romania, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind its relevant resolutions, the latest of which is resolution [77/91](#) of 7 December 2022,

Taking note of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the latest of which is resolution GC(67)/RES/13, adopted on 28 September 2023,

Cognizant that the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region of the Middle East would pose a serious threat to international peace and security,

Mindful of the immediate need for placing all nuclear facilities in the region of the Middle East under full-scope safeguards of the Agency,

Recalling the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 11 May 1995,¹ in which the Conference urged universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons² as an urgent priority and called upon all States not yet parties to the Treaty to accede to it at the earliest date, particularly those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities,

Recognizing with satisfaction that, in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,³ the Conference undertook to make determined efforts towards the achievement of the goal of universality of the Treaty, called upon those remaining States not parties to the Treaty to accede to it, thereby accepting an international legally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices and to accept Agency safeguards on all their nuclear activities, and underlined the necessity of universal adherence to the Treaty and of strict compliance by all parties with their obligations under the Treaty,

Recalling the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on 11 May 1995, in which the Conference noted with concern the continued existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, reaffirmed the importance of the early realization of universal adherence to the Treaty, and called upon all States in the Middle East that had not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place all their nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards,

¹ See 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, Part I ([NPT/CONF.1995/32 \(Part I\)](#) and [NPT/CONF.1995/32 \(Part I\)/Corr.2](#)), annex.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 729, No. 10485.

³ 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, vols. I–III ([NPT/CONF.2000/28 \(Parts I and II\)](#), [NPT/CONF.2000/28 \(Part III\)](#) and [NPT/CONF.2000/28 \(Part IV\)](#)).

Acknowledging that, in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,⁴ the Conference emphasized the importance of a process leading to full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and decided, inter alia, that the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution, in consultation with the States of the region, would convene a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States,

Expressing regret and concern that the conference was not convened in 2012 as mandated and that little progress has been achieved towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty,

Noting, in this context, the relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States aiming at the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General,⁵

Recalling that Israel remains the only State in the Middle East that has not yet become a party to the Treaty,

Concerned about the threats posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the security and stability of the Middle East region,

Stressing the importance of taking confidence-building measures, in particular the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in order to enhance peace and security in the region and to consolidate the global non proliferation regime,

Emphasizing the need for all parties directly concerned to seriously consider taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and, as a means of promoting this objective, inviting the countries concerned to adhere to the Treaty and, pending the establishment of the zone, to agree to place all their nuclear activities under Agency safeguards,

Noting that 187 States have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,⁶ including a number of States in the region,

1. *Recalls* the conclusions on the Middle East of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,⁷ and calls for the speedy and full implementation of the commitments contained therein;

⁴ 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, vols. I–III (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I), NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. II) and NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. III)).

⁵ A/78/205 (Part II).

⁶ See resolution 50/245 and A/50/1027.

⁷ 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, vol. I (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), part I, Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions, sect. IV.

2. *Stresses* that the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty⁸ is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995;
3. *Reiterates* that the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved;
4. *Calls for* immediate steps towards the full implementation of that resolution;
5. *Reaffirms* the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East;
6. *Calls upon* that State to accede to the Treaty without further delay, not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, to renounce possession of nuclear weapons and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards as an important confidence-building measure among all States of the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security;
7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution;
8. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session the item entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

⁸ See 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, Part I (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I) and NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I)/Corr.2), annex.