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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region
of the Middle East

Security Council
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Identical letters dated 8 November 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

After nearly a month of witnessing the Israeli occupying forces engage in practices that blatantly violate international law, and systematically commit violations of a genocidal nature against defenceless Palestinian civilians in the occupied Gaza Strip, we were extremely shocked to learn that, on 5 November, one of the ministers of the Israeli occupation Government, Amihai Eliyahu, had said that dropping an atomic bomb on Gaza is an option.

That statement is an act of escalation that cannot be condoned given the direct and grave threat it poses to regional and international peace and security. Moreover, this is not the first time that an Israeli official has spoken on the subject; Ehud Olmert addressed also addressed it in 2006. This menacing nuclear rhetoric comes at a time when the irresponsible practices of the occupying forces, which defy international law, have reached the most extreme level possible, and when the extremist, racist and inhumane incitement by Israel against all things Palestinian has reached unprecedented heights. The adoption of such a position by someone who is supposedly a responsible member of government cannot be considered as being simply an irresponsible statement by an individual. Instead, it must be dealt with as a tangible threat to the existence, security and safety of the occupied Palestinian territories and its people, as well as all the peoples of the region.

For many decades, the Group of Arab States, with the support of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as a whole, has advocated that the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is an indispensable necessity of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The United Nations and many other international forums have adopted dozens of resolutions in support of that vital and legitimate demand, including Security Council resolutions [487 \(1981\)](#) and [687 \(1991\)](#), of which the latter was adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Despite all the efforts made and the sincere intentions of our peace-loving countries, which aspire to live in security and stability and are committed to the ultimate goal of the total, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons, in order to bring about a world free of nuclear



weapons, the occupying Israeli forces have continued to disregard those authoritative international resolutions. Israel, with support and political cover provided by several international actors in a clear example of double standards, remains the only party in the region that has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and its nuclear facilities and activities continue not to be subject to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We should like to remind you that it is the position of the international community not to tolerate any direct or indirect threat of the use of nuclear weapons. The United Nations system and its Member States should issue a strong, comprehensive and unambiguous condemnation in view of the gravity of the matter and the profound and widespread concerns that it has raised because of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences associated with any use of nuclear weapons. I should like to emphasize that it is unacceptable to turn a blind eye to this development and remain silent. Doing so would only amplify the irresponsibility of the occupying forces and their sense of impunity, and would encourage extremists to continue violating international law. Failure to act would constitute a breach by the United Nations of its responsibility to protect the purposes and principles of the Charter given the serious harm the current situation has caused to international peace and security, the existential threat it poses to the peoples of the region and its potential to undermine the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

In view of the foregoing, and in line with Security Council resolutions [487 \(1981\)](#) and [687 \(1991\)](#) and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the General Conference of IAEA, I request that you take all measures necessitated by the conduct of the Government of Israel, with a view to holding it accountable in accordance with international law. Such a threat is a crime of genocide and constitutes a serious violation of all instruments concerning nuclear weapons. In addition, this extremely dangerous statement must be brought, without delay, to the attention of the Security Council, so that it can fulfil its responsibilities and take all necessary measures in a manner that reflects the common international will to protect the world from the threat and rid the Middle East region of nuclear weapons. The Council must also reiterate the legitimate and indisputable demands that a ceasefire must be implemented immediately, that civilians must be protected, that displacement must be prevented and that there must be an effective humanitarian response to this new stain on the human conscience.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 95, of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Taher M. T. Elsonni**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Libya to the United Nations
Chair of the Group of Arab States