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General and complete disarmament: preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2024

[on the report of the First Committee ([A/79/408](#), para. 114)]

79/55. Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [62/46](#) of 5 December 2007, [65/74](#) of 8 December 2010, [67/51](#) of 3 December 2012, [69/50](#) of 2 December 2014, [71/66](#) of 5 December 2016, [73/66](#) of 5 December 2018, [75/70](#) of 7 December 2020 and [77/77](#) of 7 December 2022,

Recognizing the essential contribution of radioactive sources to social and economic development, and the benefits drawn from their use for all States,

Recognizing also the determination of the international community to combat terrorism, as evident in relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions,

Noting with satisfaction the continued international efforts to strengthen further the security of radioactive sources worldwide,

Mindful of the sovereign rights and the responsibilities of every Member State, in accordance with their national legal frameworks and international obligations, to maintain effective nuclear safety and security,

Asserting that responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State, and noting the important contribution of international cooperation in supporting the efforts of States to fulfil their responsibilities,

Deeply concerned by the threat of terrorism and the risk that terrorists may acquire, traffic in or use radioactive sources in radiological dispersion devices,

Deeply concerned also by the potential threat to human health and the environment that would result from the use of such devices by terrorists,

Noting with concern the occurrence of nuclear and radioactive materials that are outside of regulatory control or being trafficked,



Noting with deep concern the consequences of armed conflicts as well as attacks in all forms by terrorists on the safety and security of radioactive sources that could lead to a loss or a theft of these sources and increase the risk of trafficking of such sources,

Recalling the importance of international conventions aimed at preventing and suppressing such a risk, in particular the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, adopted on 13 April 2005,¹ and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, adopted on 26 October 1979,² as well as its Amendment, adopted on 8 July 2005,³ which entered into force on 8 May 2016,

Noting that actions of the international community to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and prevent access by non-State actors to weapons of mass destruction and related material, notably Security Council resolutions [1540 \(2004\)](#) of 28 April 2004, [1977 \(2011\)](#) of 20 April 2011, [2325 \(2016\)](#) of 15 December 2016 and [2663 \(2022\)](#) of 30 November 2022, constitute contributions to the prevention of acts of terrorism using such materials,

Taking note of resolutions GC(68)/RES/8 and GC(68)/RES/9, adopted on 20 September 2024 by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency at its sixty-eighth regular session, which address measures to strengthen international cooperation and measures to enhance nuclear and radiation safety and nuclear security,

Stressing the importance of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in promoting and reinforcing the safety and security of radioactive sources, in particular by establishing technical guidance and supporting States in the improvement of national legal and regulatory infrastructure, and in strengthening coordination and complementarities among various nuclear or radiological security activities,

Noting the organization by the International Atomic Energy Agency of the International Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources – Accomplishments and Future Endeavours, held in Vienna from 20 to 24 June 2022, welcoming the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration at the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts, held in Vienna from 10 to 14 February 2020, recalling the holding of the first Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, in Vienna from 28 March to 1 April 2022, and the adoption of the Outcome Document, and recalling the convening of the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Shaping the Future, held in Vienna from 20 to 24 May 2024,

Noting also the utility of the Incident and Trafficking Database as a voluntary mechanism for the international exchange of information on incidents and illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material, encouraging the International Atomic Energy Agency to further facilitate, including through designated points of contact, the timely exchange of information, including through secured electronic access to information contained in the Database, and encouraging all States to join and participate actively in the Database programme in support of their national efforts to prevent, detect and respond to radioactive and nuclear materials that may have fallen out of regulatory control,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2445, No. 44004.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1456, No. 24631.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3132, No. 24631.

Noting further the importance of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management⁴ with respect to its provisions on the safe management of disused sealed sources,

Highlighting the importance of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, of its supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and of its supplementary Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources as valuable instruments for enhancing the safety and security of radioactive sources, noting that 149 States members of the International Atomic Energy Agency have made a political commitment to implement the provisions of the Code, 131 States have made a similar commitment to the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and 58 member States have made a similar commitment to the supplementary Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources, while recognizing that they are not legally binding,

Noting that a number of States have not yet become parties to the pertinent international instruments,

Taking note of the Nuclear Security Plan 2022–2025 of the International Atomic Energy Agency,⁵ and encouraging Member States to make voluntary contributions to the International Atomic Energy Agency Nuclear Security Fund,

Welcoming the fact that Member States have taken multilateral actions to address the security of radioactive sources, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 78/8 of 8 November 2023,

Noting the various international efforts and partnerships to enhance nuclear and radiological security, encouraging further efforts to secure radioactive sources, and noting in this respect guidance and recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency with regard to safe and secure management of radioactive sources,

Taking note of the findings of the International Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources of 2022, which, inter alia, call for further assessment of the merits of developing an international convention on the safety and security of radioactive sources so that Member States can make the best-informed decisions on the matter,

Noting that the Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism Prevention Unit of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) works with nations to strengthen capabilities to counter radioactive source smuggling and prevent terrorists from acquiring such materials, and that INTERPOL Project Geiger promotes the sharing of sensitive law enforcement information on known nuclear smugglers and incidents involving radioactive materials,

Welcoming the ongoing individual and collective efforts of Member States to take into account in their deliberations the dangers posed by the lack or insufficiency of control over radioactive sources, and recognizing the need for States to take more effective measures to strengthen those controls in accordance with their national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law,

Welcoming also the activities of Member States to mitigate insider threats, and recognizing the importance of international cooperation and assistance in this regard,

Mindful of the urgent need to address, within the United Nations framework and through international cooperation, this rising concern for international security,

⁴ Ibid., vol. 2153, No. 37605.

⁵ International Atomic Energy Agency, document GC(65)/24.

1. *Calls upon* Member States to support international efforts to prevent the acquisition and use by terrorists of radioactive sources and, if necessary, suppress such acts, in accordance with their national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law;
2. *Encourages* all Member States that have not yet done so to become party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism as soon as possible, in accordance with their legal and constitutional processes;
3. *Invites* Member States, in coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency and in accordance with its statute, to consider the merits of conducting an evaluation of the existing international framework applicable to the security of radioactive sources and, if necessary, to explore possible options for its potential strengthening;
4. *Urges* Member States to take and strengthen national measures and capabilities, as appropriate, to prevent the acquisition and use by terrorists of radioactive sources as well as terrorist attacks on nuclear plants and facilities which would result in radioactive releases, and, if necessary, to suppress such acts, in particular by taking effective measures to account for, control, secure and physically protect such facilities, materials and sources in accordance with their national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with their international obligations;
5. *Stresses* the need for Member States to take effective measures, following their international and domestic obligations, for the security and accountability of the transport of radioactive sources;
6. *Encourages* Member States to enhance their national capacities with appropriate means of detection and related architecture or systems, including through international cooperation and assistance in conformity with international law and regulations, with a view to preventing, detecting and responding to illicit trafficking in radioactive sources;
7. *Invites* Member States, in particular those producing and distributing radioactive sources, to support and endorse the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency to enhance the safety and security of radioactive sources, as described in General Conference resolutions GC(68)/RES/8, on nuclear and radiation safety, and GC(68)/RES/9, on nuclear security, and to enhance the security of radioactive sources, as described in the Nuclear Security Plan 2022–2025;
8. *Urges* all States to maintain effective security of radioactive sources, including of storage facilities, that may pose a significant risk to individuals, society and the environment throughout their life cycle, and encourages all States to make political commitments to the non-legally binding and voluntary Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources, and to implement these, as appropriate, in order to maintain effective security of radioactive sources throughout their life cycle;
9. *Encourages* Member States to work with the International Atomic Energy Agency to enhance the non-legally binding international framework for the security of radioactive sources, especially on the safe and secure management of disused radioactive sources, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Agency, in particular resolutions GC(68)/RES/8 and GC(68)/RES/9;
10. *Recognizes* the value of information exchange on national approaches to controlling radioactive sources, and takes note of the endorsement by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency of a proposal for a formalized process for a voluntary periodic exchange on information and lessons learned and for

the evaluation of progress made by States towards implementing the provisions of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources;

11. *Encourages* Member States to participate, on a voluntary basis, in the Incident and Trafficking Database programme of the International Atomic Energy Agency;

12. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by Member States, including through international cooperation under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to search for, locate, recover and secure lost or orphaned radioactive sources within their State jurisdiction or territory, encourages continued efforts in this way, and also encourages cooperation among and between Member States and through relevant international and, where appropriate, regional organizations aimed at strengthening national capacities in this regard;

13. *Encourages* Member States, in accordance with their national laws, policies and priorities, to provide support for academic and scientific research to develop technically and economically appropriate technologies with the capability to further improve the security of radioactive sources or reduce the risk of acquisition by terrorists and of malicious use of radioactive sources, including by, on a voluntary basis and when technically feasible and economically realistic, developing technologies that do not rely on high activity radioactive sources and developing exchanges on alternative technologies, without unduly hindering the beneficial uses of radioactive sources;

14. *Invites* all Member States to participate, on a voluntary basis, in the annual meeting of the ad hoc working group of stakeholder States involved with alternative technologies to high activity radioactive sources;

15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its eighty-first session, under the item entitled “General and complete disarmament”, the sub-item entitled “Preventing the acquisition by terrorists of radioactive sources”.

*43rd plenary meeting
2 December 2024*