



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Topic 1: Combatting the Resurgence of Weapons of mass Destruction (WMDs) in the Middle East.

President: Jeeda Zalloum



President's Letter

Esteemed Delegates,

I'm honoured to welcome you all to this year's International Atomic Energy Agency!

For the past two years, MontessoriMUN has become an integral part of my MUN journey, from beginning as a delegate in the Human Rights Council, to serving as Chair of that very committee the following year, and now President of this year's International Atomic Energy Agency. I've had the opportunity to grow through and with this conference.

The International Atomic Energy Agency serves as the world's centre for cooperation in the nuclear field. It aims to promote safe, secure as well as peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of all countries. The IAEA's work serves as a reminder that science, diplomacy, as well as responsibility must coexist in a time where global issues demand cooperation.

My name is Jeeda Zalloum, a Junior at Ahliyyah and Mutran, and I'm honored to serve as President of this year's International Atomic Energy Agency! I cannot wait to meet you all and can't wait to see you all debate passionately throughout the conference!

Wish you all the best of luck!

Best regards,

Jeeda Zalloum,

President of the International Atomic Energy Agency



Introduction to the Committee

The International Atomic Energy Agency serves as the world's foremost intergovernmental forum for global cooperation in the nuclear field. It was founded on July 29, 1957, to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and prevent diversion for military purposes. It was established in response to the US President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" initiative, which was made to ensure that nuclear technology would focus on contributing to scientific progress and human development rather than global destruction.

Today, the International Atomic Energy Agency plays a key role in monitoring nuclear programs, ensuring compliance with international safeguards, and assisting member states in areas such as nuclear safety, security, and medical applications of nuclear science. With around 180 member states, the agency continues to mediate technological advancement and international peace, working to realize the benefits of nuclear energy while reducing the risks of proliferation.

Terminology

- **Resurgence:** The act of rising again into life, activity, or prominence after a period of decline or forgetting.
- **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs):** Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive weapons designed to cause widespread death and harm to large numbers of people, infrastructure, and the environment.
- **Nuclear weapons:** A bomb or missile that uses nuclear energy to cause an explosion.
- **Chemical Weapons:** The use of the toxic properties of chemicals to cause death, permanent harm, or temporary incapacitation to humans or animals.
- **Biological Weapons:** Weapons designed to release disease-causing organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals, or plants.
- **Radiological weapons (dirty bombs or radiological dispersal device (RDD)):** Weapons designed to disperse radioactive material into an area, causing contamination, panic, and disruption, rather than a large-scale physical explosion.

- **Non-Proliferation:** The prevention of an increase or spread of something, especially the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons.
- **Disarmament:** The reduction or withdrawal of military forces and weapons.



History

The nuclear shadow over the Middle East is long and growing longer. More precisely, there are many nuclear shadows over the region. However, deep-seated rivalries, disagreements over objectives and priorities, and a lack of trust among regional actors have hindered progress and diverted attention away from collaborative initiatives to mitigate regional proliferation challenges. Concerns are emerging about a potential tipping point in the region, whereby the choice of one actor to “go nuclear” precipitates a cascade of decisions by others to do the same.

Let us begin with the shadows from the past. In the 1960s, before the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) was negotiated and entered into force, some in the region pursued nuclear power generation and, to varying degrees, the technical capabilities to design and build nuclear weapons. This included, for example, Iran and Iraq. At least a couple (Egypt and Libya) tried to purchase weapons from others. The NPT compelled many states to abandon whatever weapons ambitions they might have had. In the 1980s, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Syria all took steps to develop some of the technical capabilities that could be useful in a nuclear program with both peaceful and military applications.

Current Situation

The issue of WMDs remains a major security worry since the Middle East is one of the most unstable regions in terms of proliferation threats. Long-standing rivalries, regional conflicts, and state mistrust have impeded global non-proliferation efforts. International initiatives such as the establishment of a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (ME WMDFZ) have not progressed despite decades of discussion due to political instability and lack of a shared vision.

The international community has been very concerned about Iran's nuclear program. Despite Iran's claims that its nuclear activities are completely peaceful, the world community and other states are concerned about Iran's enrichment of uranium at ever higher levels. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was once a major diplomatic achievement, has essentially collapsed, casting doubt on Iran's future nuclear aspirations. Critics argue that Iran may rapidly create a nuclear weapon if it so chooses, while supporters insist that Iran's program remains within the legal bounds established by the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In addition to Iran, other Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey have also expressed a growing interest in nuclear technology for civilian use. Saudi Arabia, in particular, has stated openly that if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, it might feel compelled to do the same. Although present programs are peaceful

under IAEA supervision, observers worry that shifting regional security dynamics may incite these countries to pursue nuclear targets beyond energy production. This makes it more difficult to strike a balance between preventing the spread of weapons and promoting nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

On one end of the spectrum, countries and international organizations stress that the use of WMDs in the Middle East is a threat to global peace as well as regional stability. They call for stability regulation, new negotiations, and compliance with accords such as the NPT and the Chemical Weapons Conventions. On the other hand, some states contend that disarmament is impossible without addressing more general security issues and that WMDs are an essential deterrent in an unstable and conflict-ridden region.

Striking a balance between these opposing perspectives is difficult: ensuring non-proliferation and disarmament while also catering to governments' legitimate security needs. The International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations continue to play a crucial role in fostering communication, establishing verification protocols, and supporting initiatives to boost confidence. However, the path to a WMD-free Middle East remains extremely complex and necessitates both regional trust and collaboration.

Parties involved

- **Iran:** The primary focus of the nuclear proliferation concerns due to its uranium enrichment program. Iran is the core subject of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which seeks to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons.
- **Saudi Arabia:** A major regional rival to Iran, and has previously stated that it would pursue its own nuclear weapons if Iran did. Saudi Arabia's new civilian nuclear program is a key proliferation concern, as it is a major purchaser of advanced missiles.
- **Egypt:** Dedicated a lot of effort to establishing a Middle East WMD-Free Zone. Egypt has used its diplomatic power at the UN and the Arab League to press for regional disarmament, particularly concerning neighboring countries' nuclear capabilities.
- **Syria:** A state that has verifiably used chemical weapons against its own citizens during the Al-Assad rule. Its full chemical weapon declaration remains unresolved, making it a central issue for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

- **United Arab Emirates:** Contains a Barakah nuclear power plant, considered a global “gold standard” model for non-proliferation, as it has voluntarily renounced domestic uranium enrichment and reprocessing, which sets a high standard for regional nuclear development.
- **The United States of America:** An international actor and security guarantor for many key regional states in the Middle East. It led to the formation of the P5+1, which is 6 world powers consisting of the P5 members and Germany that negotiated the JCPOA, and plays a key role in imposing sanctions and negotiating with Iran.
- **Russia:** A military and diplomatic ally with Iran and Syria, and has previously used its veto power in the UN Security Council to protect its interests, especially regarding UN and OPCW actions concerning chemical weapons and nuclear issues.
- **China:** A major economic and political partner for Iran and the Gulf States. It's a permanent member of the P5+1 and a crucial supporter of the JCPOA, as well as its eventual economic benefits.
- **France and the United Kingdom:** As permanent members of the P5+1 and nuclear-weapon states, France and the United Kingdom are key members of the

E3/EU group, with a focus on preserving the diplomatic architecture of the JCPOA.

- **Germany:** The non-nuclear-weapon member of the P5+1 that has significant economic influence and is a vital member of the E3/EU group, providing diplomatic weight as well as support for the multilateral effort to contain Iran's program.



Guiding questions

- How can states' rights to explore nuclear technology for peaceful purposes be respected while the international community ensures non-proliferation in the Middle East?
- Before making significant strides toward a Middle East WMD-Free Zone, what needs to be done to solve more general regional security issues (such as rivalries, wars, and deterrence)?
- How can institutions like the UN and IAEA help Middle Eastern states strike a balance between enforcement, verification, and fostering confidence-building among Middle Eastern states?
- What are the potential risks of WMDs falling into the hands of non-state actors?
- What measures can be introduced to build trust among Middle Eastern states and encourage regional cooperation toward a WMD-free zone?
- What are the main reasons behind the resurgence of WMD programs in certain Middle Eastern states and non-state actors?

Citations

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