

**Forum:** First General Assembly

**Issue:** Measures to limit nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

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## Introduction

Only two nuclear weapons have been exploded in warfare; and although in quantity it may be minimal, there is no question regarding the negative impact it has on the world, how much of a threat it is, was and will be to countless of lives, the security of the whole Earth and the process of being able to reverse its effects.

Reportedly, 22,000 nuclear weapons pose a threat to the world today. With at least 80 of them reportedly being under possession in the Middle East under Israel; these nuclear weapons are in defiance of the several efforts that are being made towards the abolition of arsenal worldwide. While multiple efforts are being made to solve the issue, such as the proposal and integration of multilateral nuclear disarmament treaties to achieve a world that is clear of nuclear weapons, the issue continues to be a situation afflicted with numerous complications and predicaments. Only less than 0.1 of the explosive yield of the current nuclear weapons would be able to enable life-altering impediments; like widespread famine, the disintegration of the agriculture industry, as well as far-reaching explosions causing “nuclear winters,”: a consequence and portrayal of a nuclear war.

With moral deliberations aside, even the most innovative military individuals are unable to efficiently justify the utilization of nukes on the warfront, where it’s application, through the use of conventional weapons, can result in almost any target being struck.

Whereas the concept of human extinction is not as plausible, nuclear proliferation and its inevitable application may cease the wellbeing of those inhabiting Earth. After the first use of nuclear weapons in war, they proceeded to be the basis for numerous states’ national security policies. Post 70 years, nations still strive for stronger protection regardless of the risk it would have on innumerable lives and many resources. Its intentions of use for security, safety, and peace instead led to inflicting fear and nurturing mistrust, bringing nothing but global insecurity. Undeterred by the thousands of nuclear weapons destroyed during and after the cold war, nations persisted with depending on nuclear weaponry

with false beliefs that doing so would cause 'nuclear deterrence' which accomplished the opposite and endanger international security and the world as they remain to exist.

As of now, Israel is the only country within the Middle East that is known to possess nuclear weapons. However, it has not confirmed the exact number of nuclear weapons in its possession but it is estimated that Israel retains approximately 80 nuclear weapons. This represents the 0.4% of the worlds' comprehensive number of nuclear weapons. Although, it is not large in number, being held by a nation that is small as well as situated in an unstable region, would have its consequences and constitutes a threat against the Middle East itself. Hence, the importance of limiting the proliferation of nuclear in the weapons in the Middle East is vital to its safety.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Nuclear weapon**

A weapon, usually in the form of a bomb or missile, that explodes when a nuclear reaction occurs, and results in mass destruction.

### **Nuclear weapon free-zone (NWFZ)**

A nuclear weapon free-zone is a region in which nuclear weapons are not developed, deployed or used. Steps towards the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East started in the 1960s. Several attempts have been made however, as Israel refuses to sign the NPT, the Middle East is yet to achieve such a goal. Some treaties involved with the creation of NWFZs include the Treaty of Rarotonga (South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty).

### **Nuclear winter**

A nuclear winter is a state in which the sun's rays are blocked by a cloud of smoke and dust, following a nuclear bombing, resulting in unusual cold and darkness. The possible consequences of a nuclear winter include the dramatic drop in temperatures, decrease in rainfall and increased ultraviolet radiation. Nuclear winters are a possible threat in the Middle East, since many of the Middle Eastern nations are allied with nuclear-possessing countries around the world.

### **Nuclear proliferation**

The spread of nuclear weapons or any weapon that makes use of nuclear energy, often to nations that do not already possess them. The fear of increased nuclear proliferation led to the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Currently, Iran and Israel are the only countries in the Middle East that are able to construct nuclear weapons or already possess such a weapon. Nuclear

proliferation is a great threat to the Middle East, especially as many of the nations in the region are in conflict. As a result, all the countries in the Middle East except Israel have signed the NPT.

### **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

An international treaty which aims to limit and eliminate the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, in order to encourage cooperation in the harmless uses of nuclear energy. It also intends to achieve global nuclear disarmament. It was created in response to the increasing threat of a nuclear war, which dates back to the Cold War. Currently, Israel is the only country in the Middle East that have not signed the NPT. It refuses to do so, and maintains a policy of ambiguity regarding its nuclear weapons. The relationship between the Middle Eastern nations and Israel is hostile, and the countries continue to pressurize Israel into signing the NPT.

### **IAEA safeguards**

An inspection system which aims to verify the peaceful uses of nuclear materials by nations, and their adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), in order to limit nuclear proliferation. The IAEA safeguards are in practice in the Middle East as well as other regions of the world. As of 2014, three countries in the Middle East (Iraq, Iran, Syria) were in non-compliance with their IAEA safeguards requirements under the NPT. The inspection system has loopholes which were exploited by nations. Of those loopholes, one significant flaw is how there is no IAEA verification for acquiring nuclear material like uranium from ores, which countries used to their advantage and continued working on nuclear matter in unreported facilities.

### **Uranium**

Uranium is a radioactive metal used as a fuel in nuclear reactors. It is widely used to develop nuclear weapons as it is capable of maintaining a nuclear fission chain reaction thus, it can generate a large explosion. The first ever nuclear bomb was uranium-based. The explosion it resulted in is equivalent to the bombing of 12,500 tonnes of TNT.

## **Background Information**

At minimum, seven countries have pursued the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. With Israel as the first, and only successful state to own nuclear warheads, countries such as Egypt, Iraq and Libya have previously attempted to pursue nuclear weapons, but were not successful. Middle Eastern nations have sought to attain nuclear weapons, not for war purposes or harmful intentions, but merely for protection, prompted by security fears and the rise of nationalism in the region. This fear is heightened as a result of Israel's nuclear monopoly in the region. Israel has previously taken military action against what it saw as proliferation threats in Syria and Iraq. In 2007, they bombed a

suspected nuclear reactor in Syria, and attacked an Iraqi atomic pile in 1981. Likewise, Israel made public threats to attack Iranian nuclear facilities in the past. Similarly, the case of Saudi Arabia and Iran could be taken as an example of the proliferation of nuclear weapons for security purposes and nationalism. Both of these countries are in conflict due to the differences in religious beliefs. As a result, Saudi Arabia pledges to create a nuclear bomb if Iran does so. The same however, could not be said for all Middle Eastern countries, as Qatar insists on the creation of a NWFZ in order to mitigate the unrest in the region.

The danger of nuclear weapons in the Middle East further destabilizes the already trouble-filled region with domestic as well as regional conflicts. The Middle East is plagued with conflicts over religion, culture, land and water, and of which religion seems to be intensifying the tensions regarding nuclear weapons, as both Israel and Iran practice different religions than the rest of the Middle East. Iran seems to be one of the two most significant threats as agreed by multiple nations, the other being Israel, which claim that if Iran attained nuclear weapons, it would leave the Jewish state in jeopardy. The perpetual dispute with Iran regarding its nuclear technologies puts the entire Middle East at risk. This is demonstrated when Saudi Arabia insisted it would develop and deploy a nuclear weapon if Iran does so, so as to compete with Iran, as they are long term rivals in the region, often disputing over conflicting ideas and beliefs.

### **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty aims to stop the spread of weapons technology and nuclear weapons in order to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goals of achieving nuclear disarmament. These goals are illustrated under the three pillars of the treaty which are: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the right to peacefully use nuclear technology. The NPT establishes an inspection system which the IAEA is in charge of in order to confirm compliance with the treaty through inspections conducted by the IAEA safeguards. The treaty is sometimes viewed as a way to allow the five authorized nuclear weapons states, which are the five countries which possess nuclear weapons, (United States, Russia, France, China, United Kingdom) to maintain their weapons and monopolize power, while other countries have to disarm. Although the NPT is the most adhered to arms limitation and disarmament agreement, the limited progress that it had achieved with its goals, especially nuclear disarmament, fail to make the treaty a complete success.

Without Israel's signatory on the NPT, nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is difficult to limit. As Israel is not a signatory of the NPT, it does not have grounds to follow regarding the construction of its nuclear arsenal and thus its facilities remain without safeguarding from the IAEA. This stands as a major threat to the rest of the Middle Eastern countries; therefore, countries race to deploy a large arsenal in

order to insert fear into neighbouring states in the Middle East, and to illustrate to Israel their strength as a nation protect themselves.

Nevertheless, there have been numerous violations of the NPT in the Middle East, proving the lack of actual support of the treaty, and the substandard performance of the IAEA as it had failed to initially identify said violations. For instance, Iran did not comply with the terms of the NPT as it developed its nuclear program without consulting the IAEA. This continued until 2003 when Iran eventually announced their intention to halt its nuclear program. If Iran decides that it is in their benefit to pull out from NPT in order enhance its nuclear technology and proliferate weapons, a disastrous arms race in the Middle East would be ignited. This undermines the Middle Eastern efforts to denuclearize the region as more countries are defying the treaty, and developing their own nuclear technologies. This toughens the process of establishing a NWFZ in the Middle East.

### **Nuclear Weapon Free-Zone (NWFZ)**

A NWFZ is already supported by every country in the Middle East except Israel, as it refuses to reveal its nuclear program and follows a policy of ambiguity as the Arab-Israeli conflict remains unresolved. Nonetheless, every measure and step taken to establish a NWFZ has failed, despite the acceptance of the idea by every nation. An example is resolution (A/RES/71/83) which urged Israel to accede to the NPT and place of all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, yet failed to succeed. This is largely due to the fact that the plan to establish a NWFZ does not address the main incentives that encourage countries in the Middle East to seek nuclear weapons. These motives behind pursuing nuclear weapons production come from countries' need to protect themselves from rival countries as the turmoil regarding religion and land in the Middle East continues to grow. It rather focuses on getting Israel to sign the NPT through political pressure, which is what the Arab countries agree is the first step to total elimination of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Whereas Israel insists that in order to establish a NWFZ, peace and secure relations between the countries in the region is necessary and should come first. These factors have played a major role in impeding the measures taken to limit nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

Multiple factors hinder the measures take to limit nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. Iran's non-compliance to the IAEA safeguards for example, stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Iran continues to research in that area and has facilities that are capable of producing a nuclear weapon if Iran wishes to do so. Likewise, the pulling out of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018 allows Iran to more freely work on its nuclear facilities and technologies. Likewise, Israel's ambiguity about the size of their nuclear arsenal have impeded the measures taken to create a NWFZ. Israel refuses to share its nuclear capacity in order to protect itself from its rival Arab states, as the Arab-Israeli conflict remains a problem in the Middle East. Israel refuses

to sign the NPT, and is the only country in the region in possession of nuclear weapons thus, halting the process of limiting nuclear proliferation and the establishment of a NWFZ.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### Israel

Currently, Israel is the only nation in the Middle East in possession of nuclear arsenal. With an estimated number of weapons ranging from 80 to 400, Israel constitutes a major threat to the Arab states and its ambiguity creates uncertainty and tensions in the region. Not only do the Arab states dispute with Israel over Palestine for both religious and land purposes, the Arab states now feel threatened by Israel possession and feel as though Israel is monopolizing the region with its nuclear arsenal. The fear is heightened due to the other conflicts between the countries of the Middle East and Israel, mainly the Palestinian dispute. Israel refused to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regardless of global pressure. It claims that it has been threatened by several nations which is why it is in their best interest to own such destructive devices, and states that signing the NPT would be opposing its national security benefits.

The first nuclear weapon developed by Israel's nuclear facilities is assumed to have been assembled during late 1966 or early 1967; thus, making Israel the sixth country in the world to establish and deploy nuclear weapons, and the first in the Middle East. This poses as a intimidating action towards the Middle East, who are hostile towards Israel due to the Arab-Israeli conflict over Palestine.

### Iran

Iran at present time, is not known to own any nuclear weapons and has signed several treaties, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, renouncing acquiring said weapons. Likewise, Iran has encouraged nuclear weapon states to disarm and supported the creation of a Nuclear Weapon Free-Zone in the Middle East.

Iran was found to be in non-compliance with its NPT safeguard agreement requirements and was violating them. Consequently, the United Nations Security Council demanded Iran to terminate its nuclear development programme, which Iran did not obey therefore, sanctions were imposed on Iran. Iran claimed that it had no intention of producing nuclear weapons, but was only seeking research in that area. According to IAEA figures, Iran is capable of producing a sufficient amount of uranium in order to create a nuclear missile in 1.7 months. Nevertheless, Iran states its uranium is solely intended for harmless intentions, and that work done with regards to nuclear technology is only for civilian uses. Iran states that it does not support nuclear proliferation. Additionally, evidence proves that ever since the 2003 incident, Iran did not attempt to deploy any nuclear weapons.

More recently, in 2018, the President of the United States withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, and will subsequently impose great economic sanctions on Iran. The deal was initially made to limit Iran and stop it from proliferating nuclear weapons. As a result, Iran warned that it may perhaps continue with its uranium enrichment programme without limitations if it wishes to do so. This action comes with consequences which will heavily affect the Middle East. Since Iran no longer has to comply with the deal, it is free to enhance its uranium development programme, and as a result, can produce and proliferate nuclear weapons. This heightens the instability in the region, as Saudi Arabia pledges to build a nuclear weapon if Iran does. Therefore, if Iran possess a nuclear weapon, ultimately three countries in the Middle East will become nuclear powers, leaving the region much more hostile.

## Iraq

In 1969, Iraq signed the NPT. Nevertheless, soon after it signed the treaty, during the early years of the 1970s, the president of Iraq at the time ordered the creation of a secret nuclear weapons program, thus defying the treaty's terms. Subsequently, Iraq practiced a substantial nuclear weapons program, in spite of the fact that no nuclear bomb was discovered. The nuclear weapons program underwent a major setback in 1981 when one of the reactors was bombed by Israel. The reactor had highly enriched uranium which could have been used to proliferate nuclear weapons. According to the conditions of the ceasefire proposed by the UN Security Council in Resolutions 686 and 687, Iraq is forbidden from proliferating nuclear weapons. Therefore, Iraq's nuclear weapons program was halted, and a special commission on weapons was formed alongside the IAEA to inspect Iraq and verify the termination of Iraq's nuclear program. Israel's involvement in Iraq resulted in conflict as Iraq now feels threatened by the Jewish state. Likewise, it left other countries in the Middle East in fear of Israel as it illustrated how it is capable of attacking neighbouring countries if Israel happened to see them as a threat. The participation of Israel increased the political conflict in the Middle East.

Iraq had stated previously that they did not seek to assemble nuclear warhead or any other harmful weapons, but would only do so if a time came where they must defend themselves and their nation. Studies conducted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) proved that Iraq would require years to proliferate nuclear weapons without the assistance of foreign nations; but would easily create such weapons within few months with fissile material obtained from said outside sources. Iraq stands as an example of how the nuclear proliferation was limited in the region.

## Syria

Syria signed the NPT on the 24th of September in 1969, as a non-nuclear weapon state. Syria has previously hidden nuclear weapons ambition, but currently is known to own only one functional research reactor. Nevertheless, Syria sought the assistance of the IAEA to develop its nuclear program.

Syria's nuclear program in the Al Kibar site was attacked by Israel in September 2007, where Israel conducted an airstrike on the region. The site would have been able to produce enough plutonium to construct between 1 to 2 weapons annually. As Syria was creating an undeclared plutonium production reactor, Israel carried out the airstrike to remove a threat. Israel maintained total silence regarding the attack, and only acknowledged it in 2018. On the other hand, Syria covered up its nuclear activities in the reactor while failing to cooperate with the IAEA. As a result, the IAEA was not able to confirm that the site was actually a nuclear reactor until 2011, during the civil war. Likewise, Syria repeatedly denied IAEA inspection of the site, but continues to claim that it is a non-nuclear military facility. The Israeli strike, similar to the Iraq strike, increased tensions in the region as Arab countries saw yet again how Israel is capable of attacking Muslim countries in the region.

After the IAEA inspection in June 2011 of the site, Syria was found to be violating its requirements under its Safeguards Agreement. The case was taken to the UN Security Council, who demanded that Syria must respond to the IAEA's request to access more sites, materials and individuals needed. Syria is another example of how nuclear proliferation was attempted in the Middle East, but was eventually controlled through the work of the IAEA. Currently, Syria's only active reactor is under IAEA safeguards.

Whereas Syria is not known to possess any nuclear weapons, thus it is not a direct threat to the Middle East and is not actively proliferating nuclear weapons, Syria is allied with the Russian Federation, which possesses around 7850 nuclear warheads, which as a result, poses as a great threat on the Middle East, in the case of a nuclear bombing on Syrian civilians as part of the civil war.

### **United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)**

Founded in January 1988, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) aims to advocate nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Its goal is to limit proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, chemical as well as biological weapons. Standing amongst its multiple achievements, the UNODA promotes the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The UNODA continues to help find solutions to world issues such as nuclear proliferation, with practical and authoritative help together with the work of the General Assembly's First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament alongside other bodies. The office has promoted demilitarisation through measures such as peaceful talks and dialogue between nations, expanding on military issues such as encouraging countries to be transparent about their arsenal capacities, and empowering disarmament endeavours around the world.

### **IAEA**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is an international association which aims to encourage the harmless use of nuclear energy as well as limit its use for military intentions, including the



usage of nuclear weapons. The IAEA General Conference in September 1991 adopted a resolution that stated the need for all Middle Eastern states to instantly accept the application of IAEA safeguards as a step to enhance peace and security in the context of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Ever since, the IAEA has its safeguards monitoring and inspecting the region.

## Timeline of Events

| Date                              | Description of event   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| August 1942                       | The initial project to develop the first nuclear weapon is set.  |
| August 6 <sup>th</sup> , 1945     | First use of an atomic bomb, killing more than 140,000 civilians within a month of the bombing.  |
| August 9 <sup>th</sup> , 1945     | Second use of an atomic bomb on civilisation.  |
| January 24 <sup>th</sup> , 1946   | United Nations' General Assembly call for the elimination of nuclear weapons.  |
| July 9 <sup>th</sup> , 1955       | Russell–Einstein manifesto is issued which warns the hazards of nuclear war and urges all governments to resolve conflicts peacefully. |
| July 29 <sup>th</sup> , 1957      | The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is formed with the aim to promote and oversee the peaceful use of nuclear technology.    |
| July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1968       | Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is signed.  |
| September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 1986 | Israel's nuclear programme discovered, concluding that Israel may have between 80-400 nuclear weapons.                                 |
| May 11 <sup>th</sup> , 1995       | A resolution calling for the creation of a nuclear weapon free-zone in the Middle East.  |
| November, 2012                    | A conference to start a nuclear weapon free-zone in the Middle East is postponed as not all states in the region agree on the agenda.  |
| July 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2017       | Two-thirds of the world's nations vote to implement the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.                               |

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy, 24 January 1946, A/RES/1(I)
- Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), 5 August 1963
- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 1 July 1968
- Iraq-Israel, 19 June 1981, (S/RES/487)
- Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, 8 December 1987

- Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, 9 January 1996, (A/RES/50/66)
- Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, 15 December 2016, (S/RES/2325)
- Maintenance of international peace and security: Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, 24 September 2009, (S/RES/1887)

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The issue of limiting nuclear proliferation in the Middle East has been ongoing ever since the late-20th century. Many solutions have been proposed and attempts have been made to solve the issue. The results have proved to be useful in some way as the majority of the Middle East has concluded that nuclear non-proliferation is in fact, necessary.

### Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

The most significant effort made to solve the issue of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is the formation of the NPT. The agreement's objective is to prevent the use and production of nuclear weapons, promote the peaceful use of nuclear weapons and cooperation between nations, as well as achieve nuclear disarmament. The convention is signed by every country in the Middle East except Israel, making it the treaty with most countries adhering to it than any other disarmament agreement. Still, the NPT is not signed by Israel, a relatively major power in the Middle East. The NPT cannot be regarded as fully successful in the Middle East as Israel has yet to disclose its nuclear arsenal, yet it is the most notable and effective solution of all, and is the first step to a NWFZ in the Middle East.

### Israel's ambiguity

Arab states are continuously pressurizing Israel into ending its vagueness regarding its nuclear arsenal and instead, to become more transparent with their nuclear programme. However, Israel's ambiguity has both benefits and drawbacks. Israel's ambiguity protects it from nations with which they are in conflict with. It also lessens the need for Arab states to deploy nuclear weapons, as they remain uncertain of the size of the threat coming from Israel. Therefore, the motive to proliferate nuclear weapons is not enough to encourage the rest of the Middle East to possess nuclear weapons to prove that they are more powerful than Israel. Nevertheless, this effect is soon dispersing as it outlasts its practicality. The two conflicting ideas, which are the need for Israel to reveal its nuclear arsenal and the benefits of Israel maintaining its ambiguity, has made it harder for a plausible solution to be made, and for Israel's arsenal capacity to be known to the countries of the Middle East.

### Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Also known as the Iran nuclear deal, the JCPOA is yet another example of how nuclear proliferation was restricted in the Middle East. The deal between Iran, and formerly all the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, as well as Germany, aimed to get Iran to cut down and eliminate its uranium stockpile. It lengthened the time it would take Iran to obtain enough material to construct a nuclear bomb, in an attempt to limit nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. The deal was effective until the United States withdrew from it on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018, while deciding to implement harsher sanctions on Iran. As a result of this action, Iran declared that it is ready, and will begin to enrich uranium on an industrial scale. Iran's nuclear proliferation is a step away from limiting the spread and development of nuclear weapons in the region and ensuring a nuclear-free Middle East. It also leaves the region with notable hostility towards Iran's nuclear programme.

### **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

The CTBT is another attempt at denuclearizing the world, including the Middle East. The multilateral treaty aims to ban all nuclear testing. Adopted on September 10<sup>th</sup> of 1996, the CTBT cannot enter into force until the eight specified states in Annex 2 have ratified it; of which are Israel, Iran and Egypt. As a result of those countries' not ratifying the treaty, proliferation in the Middle East is still possible. Although the CTBT is yet to enter into force, nuclear testing around the world has become undesirable as the strive for a nuclear free world becomes more plausible and ideal. Nevertheless, without a legal documentation to prohibit the testing of nuclear weapons, it cannot be guaranteed that such an act will not take place. With countries suspected of possessing nuclear weapons like Israel in the Middle East, the CTBT remains a crucial step for limiting proliferation in the Middle East. However, it is important to note that none of the countries in the Middle East who have yet to ratify the CTBT, have conducted a nuclear test since signing it.

### **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

More recent actions made towards the solution of the issue include the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which was passed on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Aiming for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the treaty is comprised of a complete set of prohibitions on partaking in any nuclear weapon activity. These include activities such as developing, testing, producing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling and using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. The TPNW also forbids the deployment of nuclear missiles on national land. Regardless of the fact that the treaty is still not in force, it remains a step forward to solve the issue of nuclear proliferation.

As provided before, actions are being taken in an attempt to solve the issue of limiting nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, yet the issue still seems to be concerning the inhabitants of the region, as well as neighbouring countries. While most nations seem to be striving to achieve total elimination, the goal of creating a NWFZ in the Middle East is not achievable due to Israel's possession of nuclear

weapons. As Israel refuses to open its borders for inspection, and the UN Security Council cannot confirm if Israel possess any nuclear weapons, sanctions cannot be imposed on Israel. The lack of cooperation between the Middle East and Israel, as well as states which are looking to pursue nuclear proliferation such as Iran, raises alarming concerns across society.

## Possible Solutions

Despite the extensive amounts of resolutions that have been passed, treaties that have been signed, and agreements that have been made in an attempt to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the issue still remains a serious concern.

To begin with, all the treaties and agreements previously made, namely the NPT, must be signed by all the nations in the Middle East. This is one way to ensure that the limiting of nuclear proliferation can be achieved. Countries that refuse to accept the terms of said treaties and agreements must be addressed to change their opinion on the matter in order to secure their support. This could be done through renewed talks and further negotiations in order to help them understand the benefits of a Middle East as a NWFZ, such as the reduction of instability and conflict in the region. However, this could only be achieved if mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation is present. Pressuring Israel into signing the NPT will not guarantee the elimination of nuclear weapons from the Middle East. In fact, it may not lead to any plausible resolution as the basis of the issue is not Israel's nuclear weapons, but the incentives provided for other Middle Eastern nations to build a nuclear arsenal. A peaceful and stable interstate environment based on mutual trust is essential for limiting nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, it is vital to have Israel accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as comply with the rules by placing all of its nuclear facilities under the IAEA's safeguards; accept the global obedience to the treaty in the Middle East. This is required in order to mitigate the tensions between the Middle Eastern states and consequently to eliminate the political conflicts caused by Israel's nuclear arsenal. However, it is important to note that Israel's ambiguity kept nations from attempting to compete against Israel's arsenal due to their uncertainty regarding the volume of their arsenal. A nuclear weapon free-zone will only be achieved if Israel ceases its nuclear weapons programme, abolishes its arsenal, and adheres to the terms of the NPT.

Additionally, the implication of economic, military, and other sanctions should not be overlooked as a means to discourage nations from developing nuclear weapons. Economic sanctions are currently employed in the cases of Iran, and although the results have not been exceptionally promising, but it cannot be denied that one small step remains a step towards a nuclear free, and peaceful world.

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## Appendix or Appendices

I. <http://bestdelegate.com/>

(Best Delegate) Provides a lot of useful resources and information about MUN i.e. how to write a resolution.

II. <http://www.un.org/en/databases/index.html>

(United Nations Databases) Links to databases for resolutions and previous conferences.