

ISRAEL

General Debate on All Disarmament and International Security Agenda Items

Statement by

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Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you for assuming the chairmanship and let me assure you of the cooperation and support of my delegation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel supports a vision of the Middle East free from war, hostility, Weapons of Mass Destruction and means of delivery. This is a vision to which all of the regions' inhabitants should aspire, based on the hope for peace, mutual recognition, reconciliation and cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostility.

At the same time, Israel believes that arms control and disarmament processes are inseparable from the context in which they exist and must be formulated in a way which addresses the prevailing circumstances, challenges and threats. Any initiative pertaining to a regional dialogue on arms control and disarmament must emanate from the region, be firmly rooted in reality, address all relevant aspects of regional security and enhance the individual and collective security of all regional partners.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Middle East has become a hub for radicalization and violent extremism. Political upheavals and failing states have created fruitful ground for the spread of terrorist organizations. These terrorist groups have not only taken firm root in the region; in some cases they even form or participate in governments. The extent to which regional states still exercise the fundamental functions which are required by the international law of states, is a serious matter that needs close and constant examination. The consequences of this situation are not limited to the region alone. They pose a grave threat well beyond the Middle East's geographic boundaries.

Mr. Chairperson,

Iran's pursuit to further develop its ballistic missile capabilities is a troubling development for the region, as well as for international security. Since the implementation day of the JCPOA, on January 16th, Iran has conducted ten ballistic missile tests, with missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The missiles tested by the Iranian regime were of various ranges, including one with a range of 2,500 km, well beyond the region of the Middle East.

During the month of March, Iran tested a missile with a threat to annihilate Israel inscribed on the missile's surface. In his July report on the implementation of UNSCR 2231, the Secretary General of the UN expressed his concern over Iran's ballistic missile launches, which have the potential to increase tensions in the region and are not consistent with the spirit of the JCPOA. The Secretary General called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to refrain from conducting such launches. Israel calls upon

the International community to unequivocally condemn these tests and show zero tolerance towards Iran's behavior.

It should be emphasized that Iran's activities aimed at undermining the region are not limited to ballistic missile tests. Tehran continues to promote subversive activities throughout the region through its support for terror organizations which includes supplying weapons, financial and political support as well as military training. These activities contradict numerous UNSC resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have been concerned for many years about the unremitting use of chemical weapons in the Middle East. The prevalent use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, which has acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention and avowed to forgo its entire chemical weapons program, has been clearly stipulated *inter alia* in the JIM report of last August. This is a source of concern which must be addressed clearly and unequivocally by the international community in order to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons. There should not be any gaps, inconsistencies or discrepancies regarding Syria's disclosures with relation to its residual chemical weapons capabilities, nor should there be any doubts in Syria's mind that the international community will not close the Syrian file while fundamental question marks remain.

The use of chemical weapons by terror organizations, such as ISIS, has also been clearly recognized by the aforementioned JIM report. This use, taken together with the erosion of regional borders, poses a deeply concerning development, especially in light of ambitions of other terrorist organizations to acquire and use such capabilities in the future. The Middle East, as the laboratory of terrorist activity, has shown that chemical weapons can unfortunately also be used by non-state actors which do not possess large or advanced platforms.

Mr. Chairperson,

Against this troubling backdrop, it is evident that any arms control- disarmament process cannot be detached from reality. Israel believes that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional states to engage in a process of direct and sustained dialogue to address the broad range of security challenges in the region, which include all those challenges and threats that states of the region face individually as well as collectively.

Such a dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, must address in an inclusive manner the threat perceptions of all regional parties in order to enhance and improve their security rather than detract from it. Direct engagement, combined with trust and confidence-building, is an essential basis

for the creation of a new security paradigm in a region fraught with wars, conflicts, disintegration of nation states and human suffering.

Accordingly, Israel agreed in 2011 to enter a process of consultations with former Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy of Finland, Jaakko Laajava, regarding the regional security challenges in the Middle East. Between October 2013 and June 2014, five rounds of multilateral consultations were held in Switzerland between Israel and several of its Arab neighbours. The central purpose of the meetings was to seek regional consensus on all the essential aspects of a conference in Helsinki. Israel attended all of these meetings and engaged in good faith with the other participants, and had agreed to a sixth meeting which did not take place due to the other side's reluctance to continue these talks.

Israel continues to believe that a direct dialogue addressing the broad range of security challenges between the regional parties is fundamental for any meaningful consensual discussion on this matter. Israel, for its part, will continue to seek such a meaningful regional discussion that could eventually lead to a more peaceful and secure Middle East.

In the meantime, Israel will continue its policy of adopting, wherever possible, arms and export control agreements and arrangements. Amongst other steps, Israel signed the CTBT in 1996 and is actively engaged in the fleshing out of the verification regime. In this very spirit, Israel co-sponsored the 2310 Security Council resolution, supporting the CTBT. Israel is party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol on Asphyxiating Gases and signed the CWC in 1993. We are actively engaged and maintain a close dialogue with the OPCW. Israel adopted a policy of adherence to all suppliers' regimes and incorporates through its legislation their control lists. In this respect, Israel's signature on the ATT reflects Israel's ongoing commitment to a robust and responsible export control system.

In conclusion Mr. Chairperson,

On the issue of cyber security, as a member of the 2009 -2010 and 2014 - 2015 GGE on Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, Israel wishes to express its support for the work of the new Group, and its hope that further consensus can be reached regarding the applicability of international law as well as the voluntary and non-binding nature of new norms.

I thank you.