

Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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

Working paper submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran, pursuant to article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, supports efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones and believes that such zones are not an end in themselves but rather a means to an end, i.e. contributing to the nuclear non-proliferation objective and enhancing global and regional peace and security.
2. The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to, and strongly supports, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, an initiative which was originally presented by Iran in 1974.
3. Consistent with this principled position, Iran has already taken various practical steps aimed at making progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in particular by becoming a party to all international legally binding instruments on weapons of mass destruction.¹ Such a high record of accession testifies to the strong commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to achieving the objective of the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction, in the Middle East in particular and at the global level in general.
4. The adoption, by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, of the resolution on the Middle East, as an essential and integral element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995 marks a turning point in advancing the proposal for the establishment of a

¹ The Islamic Republic of Iran is a party to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925 Geneva Protocol), the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, as well as a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Iran has also concluded a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency for the application of safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.



nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported and called for the speedy implementation of this resolution and the full realization of its objective in establishing such a zone.

5. Iran also supported the adoption of the 2010 plan of action on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which called for the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. On 6 November 2012, Iran officially declared its decision to participate in that conference, which had been scheduled to be held in December 2012 in Helsinki.

6. However, not only was the 2010 plan of action on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East not implemented and, consequently, the 2012 conference not convened, but in addition, the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty was unable to reach an agreement on its outcome document as a result of the objection of only the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Canada to a decision contained therein on the implementation of the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East.

7. Now, 24 years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and 9 years after the adoption of the 2010 action plan for the implementation of that resolution, and despite the strong support of the overwhelming majority of the States parties, as well as the efforts by Iran and all Arab countries in the region for their implementation, there are valid questions: why were they not implemented, and why have all efforts under the 2005 and 2015 Review Conferences for their implementation failed? The answer is clear: the Israeli regime, which is the only non-party to the Treaty and also the only possessor of nuclear weapons in the region, is the main obstacle to the establishment of such a zone. In addition, in practice, certain parties to the Treaty, by representing the Israeli regime in the Treaty's Review Conferences, object to decisions on the actual realization of this zone. One day after the conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Israeli regime, in its statement dated 29 May 2010, rejected outright the Final Document of that Conference as "deeply flawed" and stated that "Israel will not be able to take part in its implementation."

8. The Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference called on all States to refrain from undertaking any measures that preclude the achievement of the objective of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. However, the United States, as one of the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution and as one of the co-conveners of the 2012 conference, by supporting the obstructive positions of the Israeli regime and setting preconditions for the implementation of the 2010 action plan, acted as a stumbling block in the way of convening the 2012 conference and, on 23 November 2012, unilaterally announced that the conference could not be convened and that it would not support a conference in which Israel would be subject to pressure or isolation. This unilateral decision of the United States was wholly inconsistent with its declaratory commitment to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

9. Subsequently, during the 2015 Review Conference, Israeli officials expressed concern over taking any decision by the Conference "to force Israel to come clean on its nuclear capabilities" as an essential step towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In order to avoid that, Israel placed the United States under pressure to block such a decision. When the United States, along with the United Kingdom and Canada, objected to the adoption of the draft outcome document of the Conference, which contained a decision on the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 action plan on the Middle East, the Prime Minister of Israel thanked the United States President for such action.

10. But why was the Israeli regime not willing to support the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and why is it still not willing to do so? First and foremost, it is because this regime possesses nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East requires the prompt and unconditional accession of Israel, as a non-nuclear weapon party, to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, renouncing possession of nuclear weapons and placing all of its clandestine nuclear activities and facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

11. Moreover, a short look at the practices of the Israeli regime in the Middle East and its record in the fields of disarmament and international security provides a clear picture of the seriousness of the security threat posed by this regime against the peace and security of the States parties to the Treaty in the Middle East. It also proves, once again, how essential and urgent the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction is for the maintenance of peace and security in the region and beyond. That record includes, but is not limited to, the following: since its inception, the Israeli regime has waged 17 wars, which means one war almost every four years; committed aggression against all of its neighbours, without exception; even attacked several other non-neighbouring countries in the region and beyond; attacked, in 1981, the peaceful nuclear installations of a State party to the Treaty in the Middle East (in this case, the Security Council strongly condemned the military attack by Israel as a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international conduct); threatened to attack the peaceful nuclear facilities of States parties to the Treaty in the region that are under the IAEA safeguards; has recently threatened a party to the Treaty in the region with nuclear annihilation; still has under occupation the territories of several neighbouring countries, as it is called, in United Nations resolutions, the “occupying Power”; is not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or any other international instrument banning weapons of mass destruction, in defiance of repeated calls, including by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the General Conference of the IAEA, the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the summits and ministerial conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; and is the only possessor of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including hundreds of nuclear warheads, in the Middle East.

12. In addition, such realities make it completely clear that the only way to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is for the international community to exert and maintain sustained pressure on the Israeli regime to compel it to accede, promptly and unconditionally, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to place all of its nuclear activities and installations under the full-scope IAEA safeguards. This approach was acknowledged by the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, which reaffirmed “the importance of Israel’s accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East”.

13. The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its deep concern over the persistent and long delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the lack of any progress in the implementation of the respective plan of action of the 2010 Review Conference. Iran stresses that, as reaffirmed by the successive Review Conferences of the Treaty since 1995, the resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved. This, without doubt, is the individual and collective responsibility of all States parties to the Treaty, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, especially the three depositary States of the Treaty that co-sponsored the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. It should be recalled that the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 Review Conference had clearly stipulated that “the States parties renew

their resolve to undertake, individually and collectively, all necessary measures aimed at its prompt implementation.”

14. In this context and given the above-mentioned considerations, the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference should recommend:

(a) Establishing a subsidiary body under Main Committee II of the 2020 Review Conference to consider the urgent implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East and, building upon past experience, agree on concrete steps for their speedy implementation;

(b) Noting the consensus reached by the General Assembly since its thirty-fifth session that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East would greatly enhance international peace and security;

(c) Expressing concern about the lack of progress towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, as well as the action plan on the Middle East adopted at the 2010 Review Conference;

(d) Reaffirming the urgent need for the prompt and full implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East;

(e) Reiterating the firm commitment of all States parties to the Treaty, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to undertake all necessary measures aimed at the prompt and full implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East and to extend their cooperation in this regard;

(f) Emphasizing the essential role of the United Nations in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East;

(g) Expressing serious concern about the continued existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, as well as the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the security and stability of the Middle East;

(h) Expressing deepest concern over the fact that the refusal of Israel is the main obstacle to the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East;

(i) Reaffirming the importance of the accession of Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty without precondition and further delay and the placement of all of its nuclear activities and facilities under the comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East;

(j) Urging Israel to renounce possession of nuclear weapons and to place all of its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under the full-scope IAEA safeguards as an important confidence-building measure among all States of the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security;

(k) Reaffirming the commitment of all States parties to the effective prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, materials and facilities, resources or devices and the extension of know-how or any kind of assistance in the nuclear, scientific or technological fields to Israel so long as it remains a non-party to the Treaty and has not placed all of its nuclear activities and facilities under the full-scope IAEA safeguards;

(l) Deciding to establish a standing committee, comprising the members of its Bureau, to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Conference concerning the prompt accession of Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all of its nuclear activities and facilities under the full-scope IAEA safeguards, and to report to the 2025 Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee meetings.