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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by
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General Debate on All Disarmament and
International Security Agenda Items

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Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship, and let me assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are witnesses to a worrisome escalation in the realm of Arms Control. It begins and ends with the lack of commitment by states to the international community to fulfill their obligations in good faith and for a better and safer world.

The Middle East is still struggling with compliance to Arms Control norms and principles. This culture of non-compliance and disregard for international obligations and norms is unfortunately very common.

The use of chemical weapons by regimes in the Middle East, against their own population and neighboring countries, occurred five times since the Second World War, and also just as recently as this past year. This use is a clear violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Furthermore, two additional cases of member states from the region violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are still in question, and need to be further investigated.

Four cases of serious violations of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) took place in the Middle East since its creation. Two

cases of member states violating the NPT are still in question, and need to be further investigated.

Surface-to-surface missiles and rockets, their related technologies and know-how and production processes, have been proliferated and transferred to terrorist organizations across the region, with complete disregard for United Nations Security Council resolutions, the sovereignty of the involved states and the stability of the region as a whole.

Mr. Chairperson,

In May 2018, President Trump announced the United States' withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Since the inception of this agreement, the State of Israel has been unequivocal regarding its threats and the dangerous implications to the security and the stability of the Middle East. Since then, Iran has repeatedly tested the boundaries of UNSC Resolution 2231. In the last months, Iran has breached core nuclear obligations as detailed in this resolution.

The Iran Nuclear Archive provides straightforward evidence regarding Iran's Nuclear Military ambitions. Iran has concealed illicit undeclared nuclear material and nuclear equipment at the Turqzabad site. IAEA Acting DG has stated, in the last meeting of the Board of Governments of the IAEA, that Iran has not cooperated as expected with the agency to clear these allegations. These activities and other nuclear weapons' activities, conducted in the Abadeh site, are a clear breach of Iran's commitments to the NPT.

Iran also attempts to destabilize the region using every possible tool at its disposal: terrorism, the use of missiles and rockets against regional states, among them Israel, and doing so from the territory of other countries of the region, namely Syria.

Since the entry into force of UNSCR 2231, Iran has tested dozens of ballistic missiles. All of these missiles were capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

The missiles tested by the Iranian regime were of various ranges, up to 2,500 km, well beyond the boundaries of the Middle East. Iran was strongly condemned for launching a satellite launch vehicle, as it includes components used in ICBMs.

The resolution's reports call on Iran to refrain from such activities. Israel calls upon those in the international community that have not yet done so to unequivocally condemn these activities and show zero tolerance toward Iran's behavior.

Mr. Chairperson,

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 in the 2016 Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) report.

The last Fact Finding Mission (FFM) report is joined by numerous reports and statements made by the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Director General regarding gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian declaration. This is a source of concern that must be addressed clearly and firmly by the international community to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons. We hope the new mechanism - the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) - will succeed in carrying out the task of attributing the chemical attacks to their actual perpetrators. Mr. Chairperson,

Conventional weapons continue claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world on an annual basis. These weapons, especially missiles, rockets, small arms and light weapons (SALW), and related technologies, are proliferated throughout the region. Compliance and implementation of instruments, as applicable, like the UN Plan of Action (UNPoA) on SALW, are important if we wish to achieve the goal of a safer world.

Mr. Chairperson,

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On the matter of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Israel wishes to emphasize its long-stated view that the Treaty does not create, contribute to the development of, or indicate the existence of customary law related to the subject or the content of the Treaty.

On the issue of cybersecurity, Israel attaches great importance to efforts to promote security and stability in cyberspace. Israel's

global position in cybersecurity is based on a domestic ecosystem that promotes real-time information sharing, the development of adequate methodologies, encourages educational programs and raises public awareness of cybersecurity. These basic tenets should also be promoted on the global level, in order to enhance global resilience, by means of practical cooperation and capacity-building programs.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson,

Some actors in the region claim that a comprehensive security architecture can be established in the Middle East without direct engagement with Israel, without recognition of Israel's right to exist within safe and secure borders, and without reducing regional tensions and the building of the necessary trust and confidence among regional states. This position is untenable.

Initiatives of the Arab group, such as the conference in November, on a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, goes against the guidelines and principles of the Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, as were agreed by consensus, in the UN Disarmament Commission of 1999. Whereby, the process must be - freely arrived at, not imposed, taking under consideration the concerns of all the relevant sides and not singling out the state of Israel. Israel will not cooperate with counter-productive initiatives of this kind, and will not participate in the conference in November. Due to this initiative, Israel also will refrain from participating in future fora dealing with regional Arms Control topics. We regret that

we do not see the same enthusiasm in some of these actors to solve real problems of the Middle East.

The full version will appear on the UN Web.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.