

ISRAEL

First Committee
72nd UN General Assembly

Statement by
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General Debate on all disarmament and
international security agenda items

United Nations, New York

3 October 2017

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Madam Chair,

The Middle East is an area that has been fraught for many years with wars, conflicts, hostilities and human suffering. In recent times, it has grown ever more unstable and volatile, with the disintegration of national territories, the rise in areas partially or fully under the control of terrorist organizations, and the growing proliferation and diversion of conventional weapons to state and non-state actors.

This includes sophisticated weapons, and most significantly the prevalent use of chemical weapons, in contravention to international treaties and UNSC resolutions, as well as the pursuit of nuclear weapons capabilities by states in the region. Terrorist groups, some of which are supported in all possible means by states of the region, have become part and parcel of the Middle East. They participate in governments and other political processes, and control territories and populations.

This troubling reality and these threats have proven to yield devastating consequences, which are not limited to the Middle East, but rather pose a grave threat well beyond its geographic boundaries.

Israel, as should all of the region's inhabitants and states, supports a vision of a peaceful Middle East free of hostilities. Such a vision, however, cannot be fulfilled without mutual recognition, reconciliation and cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostilities, some of which are conducted or supported by states sitting in this very room.

Madam Chair,

Two years following the signing of the JCPOA, we see that Iran feels more emboldened to conduct its malign activities throughout the Middle East. Iran continues to test the patience of the international community and repeatedly tests the boundaries of the agreement and UNSC Resolution 2231.

This year has seen a dramatic upsurge in Iran's pursuit to further develop its ballistic missile capabilities. Since the Implementation Day of the JCPOA, Iran has conducted more than 20 ballistic missile tests, all 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.

Under the guise of attacking ISIS, Iran launched multiple MRBMs toward targets in Syria, without any tactical need, thus signaling its capabilities to the region. While conducting another test launch, Iranian ballistic missiles were fired at a

Jewish Star of David drawn on the ground. These and other launches are all flagrant violations of Resolution 2231.

The resolution's reports call on Iran to refrain from such activities. Israel calls upon the international community to unequivocally condemn these tests and show zero tolerance toward Iran's behavior.

Iran's malign activities are not limited to ballistic missile testing. Tehran continues to promote subversive activities throughout the region through its support for terror organizations, which include supplying weapons, financial and political support, as well as military training. These activities contradict numerous UNSC resolutions and are mentioned in the different 2231 reports.

Madam Chair,

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 2016 JIM report.

The recent FFM report clearly states that a nerve agent was used in April in the town of Khan Shaykun. The clear and unequivocal report identified various chemical components, which exist exclusively in sarin made by the Syrian regime. The JIM reports are joined by numerous reports and statements made by the OPCW Director General regarding gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian declaration.

This is a source of concern that must be addressed clearly and unequivocally by the international community to prevent the further erosion of the absolute norm against the use of chemical weapons.

The use of chemical weapons is a deeply concerning development especially in light of the ambitions of other terrorist organizations to acquire and use these capabilities in the future. These cases continue to demonstrate the erosion of the chemical taboo and that terrorists are motivated to follow suit. It is vital that the international community step up its efforts to deal with this challenge effectively and curtail any chance for future use of chemical weapons by non-state actors.

Madam Chair,

While 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 and will ruin the pursuit of a safe, stable and secure Middle East.

Regional dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, must emanate exclusively from the region and aim at addressing the concerns of all regional states on an equal footing and in an inclusive manner. This is why Israel participated in good faith in the five rounds of the Gilion

process while the Arab side refused to engage in a constructive manner and ultimately withdrew from the consultations.

Madam Chair,

Conventional weapons continue claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world on an annual basis. These weapons, especially SALW and weapons systems such as MANPADS are proliferated in the region, in the form of either a commodity or in knowhow and expertise. Israel looks forward to the 3rd review conference on the UNPoA on SALW and is actively engaged in the preparatory process.

Finally, Madam Chair,

On the matter of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Israel wishes to emphasize its 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 cyber security, as an active contributor to previous GGE's, Israel regrets that the latest Group was unable to agree consensually on the outstanding issues. Israel is ready to continue supporting and contributing to this important work in the future.

I thank you.