

**Statement by  
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of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations  
Before the fifth session of  
the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of  
Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction  
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*In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

**Mr. President,**

I would like to begin by congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency of this session of the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Under your able leadership, we anticipate a successful session.

We also extend our gratitude to Libya for its effective leadership during the fourth session of the Conference.

**Mr. President,**

The current global landscape, particularly the genocidal war of the Israeli regime in Gaza over the past year and its blatant aggression against other regional countries underscores the urgent need to establish a Middle East free from all WMDs. The rationale for creating a WMD-free zone in the region has never been more relevant and pressing.

**Mr. President,**

At the international level, it is deeply concerning to witness an unprecedented and alarming nuclear arms race. Nuclear Weapon States have not only failed to meet their disarmament obligations and commitments for decades, but they have also pursued the renewal and modernization of their nuclear arsenals while engaging in nuclear sharing arrangements that directly contradict their non-proliferation obligations.

It is also regrettable that the original balance of principles underlying the NPT has been distorted in favor of a disproportionate prioritization of the non-proliferation principle, while simultaneously neglecting the principles of peaceful use and disarmament. This distortion of principled balance has been used by certain States to take misguided policies and actions, including UCMs, that have unlawfully prejudiced the legitimate legal interests of non-nuclear weapon states.

At the regional level, the Israeli regime backed by the US government keeps accumulating all kinds of WMDs without being party to any legally binding international disarmament instrument and without being subject to any safeguards or verification mechanisms.

It is deeply regrettable that, for decades, there has persisted an illegitimate opposition by the Israeli regime against the ongoing international appeals to establish a zone free of WMDs, a proposal put forward by Iran in 1974.

By politicizing this initiative, the Israeli regime seeks to conceal the true reason behind its opposition to the establishment of a Middle East free of WMDs, which is to safeguard its own WMD program by remaining free of any legally binding commitments.

The Israeli regime's actions, including acts of terrorism and sabotage targeting civilian nuclear programs and scientists in the region, as well as its Prime Minister's call for a "credible nuclear threat against Iran" during the 78th UN General Assembly session on September 22, 2023, and an Israeli minister's proposal to use nuclear weapons in the Gaza Strip, demand immediate intervention by international bodies such as the UN Security Council and the IAEA.

We categorically condemn these illegal and irresponsible actions, emphasizing the danger posed by WMDs in the hands of such an illegitimate regime. These actions underscore the urgent need for a zone free of WMDs in the region, as a critical step to address the Israeli regime's WMD capabilities and rid the region of these menacing weapons.

**Mr. President,**

As the Conference marks its fifth year, it is essential to reflect on past and future sessions of both the Conference and its Working Committee in order to strengthen its overall trajectory. In this regard, we offer the following observations:

1. The Conference is the only initiative providing a comprehensive framework where all countries in the Middle East are willing to engage in discussions on the sensitive issue of national security, while other existing mechanisms remain sub-regional rather than regional in scope. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the Conference through the constructive participation of all members and invited observers.

2. The success, sustainability, and credibility of the Conference will be compromised as long as the Israeli regime refuses to participate, with the U.S. supporting its stance by not engaging either. This issue must be given due consideration at the Conference, which should explore various avenues to overcome these obstacles.

3. One of the key achievements of the Conference is reaffirming the importance of the Israeli regime's prompt accession to the NPT and the swift submission of its nuclear facilities to a comprehensive IAEA safeguards agreement. To build on this progress, the Conference should emphasize the need for genuine disarmament before establishing a nuclear-free zone and underscore that the Israeli regime's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party must be the first step toward a WMD-free Middle East. In this context, the Israeli regime's adherence to the CWC and BWC is essential.

4. Acknowledging the lack of an agreed-upon mechanism within the IAEA for monitoring the destruction of nuclear weapons, further discussions involving technical experts from both the IAEA and member states are needed within the Working Committee to develop an effective approach.

5. The Conference must adopt a holistic approach, ensuring that chemical and biological weapons are not overlooked, especially given the lack of a verification mechanism in the Biological Weapons Convention. In this regard, we urge the allocation of thematic discussions on the chemical and biological

dimensions of the Middle East Free Zone in future sessions of the Conference, as well as within the Working Committee.

6. The scope of discussions in the Conference and the Working Committee should be limited to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Introducing non-consensual or contentious issues into the process would be counterproductive and create disincentives.

7. Members of the Conference have recognized the necessity of ensuring the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear, chemical, and biological technologies without restrictions. Future sessions of the Conference should not only reaffirm this right but also establish concrete enforcement mechanisms to protect member states' rights against any obstacles, including UCMs.

8. Future sessions of the Conference and the Working Committee could explore the establishment of a framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation to promote peace and collaboration in the region. This could include the creation of a consortium for fuel production among countries with nuclear power plants, fostering transparency, trust, and shared resources for the benefit of all parties involved.

9. Leveraging the valuable experience of other regional treaties highlights the importance of continuous and sustained engagement with those organizations. Future sessions of the Working Committee could allocate more time for in-depth discussions and the exchange of views with representatives of other regional nuclear-free zones.

10. Western nuclear-armed states participating in this Conference as observers should not misuse the opportunity to engage with regional countries on the creation of a WMD-free Middle East by making unsubstantiated allegations against Conference members. This behavior must cease in future sessions, and if it continues, the Conference should take appropriate action. These states should focus on their primary responsibility within the Conference framework: negotiating negative security assurances for the countries of the region.

11. Our discussions in this Conference should result in the adoption of coordinated positions by its members in other relevant forums. For instance, the Israeli regime's nuclear threat against Iran, like its nuclear threat against Gaza, merits condemnation by the Conference's member states.

12. Acknowledging the importance of involving relevant sectors of the Conference's members in achieving its ultimate goal, holding regional events to engage diverse military and civilian sectors is a valuable initiative. Encouraging voluntary contributions from any country in the region, beyond the host country, will significantly enhance relevant sectors' engagement and support, while also contributing to the dissemination of information, raising awareness, and improving the overall efficiency of the Conference. In this regard, we thank the State of Qatar for organizing the fruitful regional session.

13. In terms of structure, both the Conference and its Working Committee meetings have proven effective. The Working Committee has facilitated valuable discussions, supported by the presence of experts. Therefore, there is no need to establish any new organization.

**Mr. President,**

Iran remains committed to upholding its international obligations, including its CSA commitments, while safeguarding national interests in accordance with international law.

Finally, Iran is committed to actively contributing to ensuring the success of the Conference until its goal, which will enhance regional security in the Middle East and its subregions, including the Persian Gulf, is achieved.

**Thank you.**