

XXXIII

TECMUN Jr.

United Nations Institute
for Disarmament
Research

XXXIII TECMUN Jr.
Session Schedule

Wednesday, November 12th

Registration	8:00 – 9:00 h
Opening Ceremony	9:00 – 10:00 h
Break	10:00 – 10:30 h
First Session	10:30 – 12:30 h
Break	12:30 – 13:00 h
Second Session	13:00 – 15:00 h
Meal	15:00 – 16:00 h
Third Session	16:00 – 18:00 h

Thursday, November 13th

Master Conference	8:30 – 9:30 h
Break	9:30 – 10:00 h
Fourth Session	10:00 – 12:30 h
Break	12:30 – 13:00 h
Fifth Session	13:00 – 15:00 h
Meal	15:00 – 16:00 h
Sixth Session	16:00 – 18:00 h

Friday, November 14th

Seven Session	8:00 – 9:30 h
Break	9:30 – 10:00 h
Eighth Session	10:00 – 12:00 h
Break	12:00 – 12:30 h
Ninth Session	12:30 – 14:40 h
Meal	14:40 – 16:00 h
Closing Ceremony	16:00 – 18:30 h

XXXIII TECMUN Jr.
General Agenda

Secretary General: Abril Valdés Calva

GENERAL COORDINATION

Subsecretary of General Coordination: Mauro Carillo Gálvez
Supervisor of General Coordination for Co. Secretariat: Emiliano Parra Maya

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Subsecretary: Andrea Abigail Salazar López
Supervisor of Coordination: Hannia Nieves José

Plenary Session for the General Assembly

President: Fernada Cisneros Farfán

- A)** Mitigating the legal, humanitarian, and environmental repercussions of the forced relocation in the Republic of Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Republic of Maldives caused by the increasing sea levels and the historical emissions by developed nations.
- B)** Addressing the conflict in the Taiwan Strait caused by the military activities, airspace violations, and sovereignty claims between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan), with a focus on regional security and international law.

Third Commission of Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Affairs

Presidente: Diego López Peralta

- A)** Measures to regulate human rights violations and punishments against the LGBTQ+ community in Africa.
- B)** Ethical implications of artificial intelligence in healthcare access in countries with developing healthcare systems, like all of East Africa.

Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos

Presidente: Mariana Dueñas Salgado

- A)** Estrategias para garantizar la seguridad y el cumplimiento de derechos humanos de periodistas en los Estados Unidos Mexicanos frente a los ataques derivados del narcotráfico, corrupción estatal y falta de protección por parte del Estado.
- B)** Medidas para salvaguardar los derechos humanos y la seguridad de los inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos de América afectados por las políticas de deportación masiva implementadas por la administración actual del presidente Donald Trump.

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Presidente: Josué Yazid Reyes Oliveros

- A)** Medidas para frenar el tráfico ilegal de especies como amenaza a la biodiversidad y los esfuerzos de conservación global en América del Sur y la Amazonia brasileña

B) Estrategias para mitigar el impacto de los microplásticos en los ecosistemas marinos y su aplicación en el Sudeste Asiático

United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

President: María Fernanda López Islas

A) Actions to strengthen national legislation to prevent child labor in the informal textile industry in urban centers of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, where regulatory systems remain weak and exploitative practices are common.

B) Addressing the rise in mental health issues among children and adolescents following the COVID-19 pandemic with Significance in the Republic of India.

Instituto Interregional de las Naciones Unidas para Investigaciones sobre la Delincuencia y la Justicia

Presidente: Reggina Marie Orta González

A) Acciones para abordar crímenes vinculados al turismo criminal en el Sudeste Asiático, con enfoque en vacíos regulatorios y violaciones de derechos humanos.

B) El crecimiento del cibercrimen transnacional en América Latina como amenaza a la seguridad digital y jurídica.

Comisión de Derecho Internacional

Presidente: Axl Paris Ortega Rodríguez

Tópico A) Estrategias globales para detener la explotación ilegal de recursos naturales en el Amazonas, centrándose en la intervención de empresas extranjeras en Brasil y Perú.

Tópico B) Medidas para evitar el uso del derecho internacional con fines políticos, con énfasis en las sanciones económicas impuestas por los Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea a la Federación de Rusia.

Committee Against Torture

President: Mariana Méndez Cruz

A) Measures to eradicate the degrading and generational torture of genital mutilation of females in the Middle East and Africa.

B) Measures to stop mass repression, forced disappearance, and torture in the criminal procedure of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Histórica Organización de los Estados Americanos

Presidente: Aarón Vázquez Guzmán

A) Mecanismos para eliminar la influencia política del Cártel de Medellín en la República de Colombia priorizando la protección de los derechos humanos de la población. (1976-1993)

B) Medidas para la resolución pacífica del conflicto bélico interno causado por los Contras en la República de Nicaragua mediante la liberación de tensiones políticas entre los Estados Unidos de América y la Unión de Repúblicas Socialistas Soviéticas. (1979–1990)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

General Subsecretary: Samantha Salgado Nájjar
Supervisor of Coordination: Alexa Esmeralda Rivera Jimenez

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

President: Valentina Reyes Pardo

A) Mechanisms to address the rise in obstetric violence in Latin America, due to the increasing cases of professional negligence that contribute to the violation of women's reproductive rights.

B) Measures to counter Gender-Based Political Violence Against Women perpetuated by the diffusion of anti-progressive campaigns during electoral processes in the United Mexican States.

Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

Presidente: David Trujillo Loza

A) Estrategias para mitigar la crisis masiva de desplazamientos de la República de Sudán a causa de las disputas territoriales entre las Fuerzas Armadas de Sudán (FAS) y las Fuerzas de Apoyo Rápido (FAR).

B) Estrategias para frenar la crisis migratoria de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela hacia países de Latinoamérica y los Estados Unidos de América, manteniendo el enfoque en la violencia generada por las elecciones presidenciales de 2024.

Comisión Económica de las Naciones Unidas para Europa

Presidente: Camila Oliveros Dávila

A) Medidas para mitigar el impacto económico y social del envejecimiento poblacional en Europa Occidental y del Norte, con especial atención a la sostenibilidad de los sistemas de pensiones y salud.

B) Acciones para fomentar la transición energética a energías renovables en países en desarrollo, con enfoque en Asia Central.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

President: Claudia Guadalupe Pfeiffer Benítez

A) Measures to Address the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic with Emphasis on Compliance with the International Disarmament Regime.

B) Approaches to Strengthening Nuclear Non-Proliferation in the Middle East with Focus on Adherence to International Norms.

Comisión Económica para África

Presidente: Rebeca Farah Romero Pérez

A) Estrategias para contrarrestar la hambruna extrema y la escasez de recursos en origen al conflicto civil en la República del Sudán del Sur.

B) Estrategias de intervención para el deterioro de la economía de la República de Sierra Leona a causa de la epidemia de ébola.

Fonds Monétaire International

Président: Melany Fayed Cervantes Espinoza

- A) Mesures visant à réduire la perte d'emplois ruraux en République Fédérative du Brésil, en particulier dans la région du Cerrado, en raison de la dégradation des terres agricoles.
- B) Actions visant à réduire la dette extérieure de manière juste et organisée pour renforcer et diversifier l'économie africaine, en particulier en République du Zambie.

Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura

Presidente: Aarón Badillo Aguilar

Tópico Único) Medidas para la retención del desplazamiento forzado de comunidades indígenas por megaproyectos extractivos en la República Federativa del Brasil, la República de Colombia, la República del Perú y los Estados Unidos Mexicanos.

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

President: María Fernanda Domínguez Hereida

- A) Actions to prevent the recruitment of young people in the Central African Sahel region into organized crime, addressing the social roots of recruitment into gangs, cartels, and extremist networks.
- B) Strategies to limit radicalization within prison systems in the Southern Philippines and the lack of effective programs to prevent criminal recidivism.

Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America

President: Jacobo Nicolas Palafox Valdes

- A) Strengthening nuclear security protocols in Latin America and the Caribbean in response to natural disasters.
- B) Addressing the risks of illicit nuclear material trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean.

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND REGIONAL ORGANISMS

General Subsecretary: Patrick Eduardo Cunillé Paniagua

Supervisor of Coordination: Arantza Estrada Ríos

Oficina de las Naciones Unidas en Ginebra

Presidente: Alexandra Sofía Reyes Galindo

- A) Medidas para frenar la trata de personas en África Occidental, con énfasis en los matrimonios infantiles forzados.
- B) Acciones para contrarrestar la represión estatal en Irán, ocasionada por la concentración del poder en manos del líder supremo y la Guardia Revolucionaria.

Organización Internacional de la Policía

Presidente: Diego Alejandro Salazar Náfate

- A) Medidas para frenar el empleo de criptomonedas en el tráfico ilícito de especies protegidas, entre la República de Camerún, los Emiratos Árabes Unidos y la República Federal de Alemania.
- B) Medidas para erradicar las redes de trata de menores encubiertas como adopciones internacionales a través de la manipulación de procedimientos legales y la adulteración de

credenciales de identificación entre la República Federal de Nigeria, los Emiratos Árabes Unidos y el Reino de los Países Bajos.

International Committee of the Red Cross

President: Emiliano Antonio Contreras Salas

A) Measures to protect and assist the civil population and detained persons affected by the armed conflict between the State of Israel and Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip.

B) Measures to prevent and address violations of human rights in the armed conflict in the Republic of Sudan, with emphasis on the protection of civilians.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

President: Marian Robles Ortiz

Topic A) Actions to ensure the management of humanitarian consequences taking place in the Republic of Yemen as a result of its domestic conflict and the military intervention of international actors.

Topic B) Strategies to counter the human rights violations happening in Port au Prince and its surrounding areas as a result of gang violence and abuse from government authorities.

Organización del Tratado Atlántico Norte

Presidente: Fausto Moreno Hurtado

A) Medidas para contrarrestar las tensiones diplomáticas causadas en Europa del Este ante la adición de la República de Finlandia y el Reino de Suecia a la OTAN, con enfoque en el conflicto de la Federación Rusa y la República de Ucrania.

B) Medidas para enfrentar la crisis migratoria localizada en la frontera sureste de Europa, con énfasis en la ruta Mediterránea Oriental hacia la República Helénica, causada por conflictos internos localizados en el Medio Oriente con enfoque en el grupo Partido de los Trabajadores del Kurdistan (PKK) en la República Turquía.

World Bank

President: Javier Gil Rodríguez

A) Actions to limit the expansion of the agricultural frontier and large-scale deforestation in South America, with an emphasis on affected groups in vulnerable regions such as the Amazon and Gran Chaco.

B) Measures to eradicate the severe precarity of physical and economic resources in the conflict between the State of Palestine and the State of Israel, with specific attention to vulnerable citizens located in the Gaza Strip.

Consejo de Seguridad

Presidente: Emiliano Bautista Soza

A) Estrategias para prevenir el resurgimiento de la violencia armada entre el Estado de Israel y los grupos armados palestinos en Gaza y Cisjordania, al tiempo que se promueve la estabilidad a largo plazo en la región.

B) Acciones para detener el avance del programa nuclear de Corea del Norte, poniendo especial atención en sus pruebas de misiles y las amenazas que representa para la estabilidad de Asia Oriental.

International Atomic Energy Agency

President: Ana Mercado Garduño

A) Measures to prevent illicit trafficking of radioactive materials through unstable border regions, focusing on the region of Central Asia.

B) Actions to mitigate environmental and security risks of nuclear facilities in active and post-conflict zones centered on Ukraine and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Caribbean Court of Justice

President: Miguel Ángel Pérez Rodríguez

A) Appeal by Nevis Betancourt against conviction on depriving Jose Castellanos of his life in Belizean Appeal (Nevis Betancourt v The King).

B) Proceeding by Shanique Myrie against the State of Barbados on violation of human rights and free movement rights under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (Shanique Myrie v The State of Barbados).

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” — Eleanor Roosevelt

Dear reader,

Six years ago, I participated in my very first TECMUN as a judge in the *International Court of Justice*. It was a model full of challenges — not only because it was the first online TECMUN, but also because I struggled to find the courage to speak in front of delegates who were far more experienced than I was. I remember spending those three days hiding behind my camera, only speaking when the chair required me to. However, there was one moment that changed everything: watching the *Agent Defense* inspired me in a way I will never forget. It was then that I realized I also wanted to be there — to become someone capable of raising my voice and creating change. It wasn't until my second model that I discovered my true potential. I represented the Republic of Colombia in UNICEF, and that was when I asked myself why I should be afraid to express my opinions on topics that deserve to be heard. That year, I made a promise to stop doubting myself and to participate with the conviction that my voice also had value. That's when I understood that TECMUN was not just about debating — it was about growing, learning, and daring to step out of my comfort zone. That model marked the beginning of my personal evolution.

Years later, I decided to close this journey where it had all begun — in a court. I joined the *Caribbean Court of Justice* as the *Agent Defense* for the State of Barbados. During the closing ceremony, I realized I had achieved what I once only dreamed of: I had become an agent of change. I looked at the High Secretariat and understood that this was my destiny, my dream, my goal — to welcome new generations of agents determined to transform the world from within the debate halls. I share a piece of my TECMUN story with you because, just like me, you are probably seeking to grow, to find your voice, or to reach new goals. No matter where you are in your journey, what truly matters is that you keep moving forward and never stop believing in yourself.

Never stay silent in the face of injustice. Speak up, act, and make choices — because the power to create change lies both in the decisions you take and in the ones you choose not to. Educate yourself, because nurturing your mind will help you understand yourself and others. Help those who need it most, because you hold privileges that many people around the world do not — and using them to serve others is one of the noblest forms of leadership. Do everything with passion, with love, and with purpose — every single day, for yourself and for others. Inspire and be inspired, because you never know if your words or your actions might be the push someone needs to believe in themselves.

Take advantage of being here today. You have the opportunity to expand your limits, to learn, to teach, and to motivate those around you. Remember, you are not alone — there is a network of support surrounding you, believing in you, and walking beside you every step of the way. Be the person you once wished would guide you through your learning process. And above all, trust yourself — because you are capable of achieving everything you set your mind to.

Abril Valdés Calva
Secretary General for the
XXXIII TECMUN Jr.

“No hay presión cuando haces lo que realmente amas”

-Neymar Jr.

Dear participant,

Today I speak to you from the heart of a 12-year-old Mauro, who came to his first model and wants to tell you that you are about to experience one of the most beautiful things — TECMUN. A model to which we have poured our soul, heart, and life. I ask you to please come and enjoy it. I don't know if you're here because you had to or because you wanted to, but the only thing I want to say is thank you — thank you for being part of this great model, because without you, this project wouldn't be possible. Thank you for getting involved in topics that maybe others find irrelevant, but in which you see a solution.

Many people think that being in TECMUN is something insignificant, but the truth is that you are deeply engaging with issues that are real global challenges today. I want to tell you that this experience will not only give you knowledge, but it will also open doors to future and amazing academic opportunities. Moreover, you'll meet incredible people who share your same academic interests — or even new ideas that might encourage you to step out of your bubble and see the world and things from a more realistic perspective.

Lastly, I want to invite you to make the most of your time at TECMUN, because it is a unique experience that truly changes you as a person and helps you grow. Be open to change and new ideas, remembering how your past self once dreamed of creating a big change — both within yourself and in leaving a small mark on the hearts of those who dare to step out of their comfort zones and routines. Now it's your turn: laugh, cry, enjoy, learn, and above all, never let others limit your ability to create.

Mauro Carillo Gálvez
Subsecretary of General Coordination for the
XXXIII TECMUN Jr.

*“To the magic of the moment, on a glory night, where the children of tomorrow dream
away” - Klaus Meine*

Dear reader,

It has been said that the hardest part of trying new things is the moment of actually doing it, however, I do believe that the hardest part is having the persistence to keep trying until you can transform your fear into courage. Today is my fifth model in TECMUN, and after each one I have learned many new lessons, although they all share the most important one: having bravery, patience and effort will always demonstrate why they were worth it. My path in TECMUN has not been easy, it has brought with it time, effort, dedication, but has mostly shown me that my voice has power. Allow me to invite you, delegate, judge, magistrate, to, even though it could be terrifying, raise your placard and say that opinion or proposal that may be the key part of a most successful model; prove to yourself that you can transform those nerves, that you have courage and decide to start changing the world from here. Remember that your voice is the biggest super power of all, and with it, you can become a changing agent for the current world. I hope that through this model I can share with you all the love, passion and excellence that TECMUN has given me; TECMUN gave my life a 360 turn, and I am sure it will do the same with yours. Be welcome to this new TECMUN Jr., live it to the best, raise your placard, defend your position, make friends and new relationships; here is the place to grow, transform and experiment. Now, you have a piece of the world in your hands, it is up to you to decide what you wish to do with it.

Samantha Salgado Nájara
Subsecretary of the/ Economic and Social Council for the
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To whom it may concern,

Yearning my words arrive to those who often overfeel, those who are passionate, or those with the biggest dreams...

As you, I also had the opportunity to participate as a delegate in TECMUN, although it wasn't until high school when I joined the model as chair, when I discovered a place I was able to call home. Moreover as time passed by I came upon I was not only feeling cozy, but motivated as well, the type of motivation I had never felt before. Suddenly, when I realized TECMUN had given me the best anecdotes, strangers in there had become my best friends and a pathway in my life was drawn. But, what am I looking for when I tell you my experience? I am seeking you to feel the same way during those three days, and it is my compromise and my biggest desire to make everything that is possible for you to feel comfortable and happy. Nevertheless what I am looking for the most, is to encourage each of you to engage in every single activity that catches your attention, to get out of your comfort zone and to attempt new projects that you had never been involved in before. Since you will never know if that novel venture is your game changer, what you have been looking for all your life, and being decisive in your destiny, that is what TECMUN represents to me. Now, discover what that exceptional calling is for you. So enjoy, own your life and give your best in everything you do.

Claudia Guadalupe Pfeiffer Benitez
President of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for the
XXXIII TECMUN Jr.

Background

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1980, as a consequence of the First Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD I) held in 1978, during which over 140 Member States recognized the importance of informed participation in disarmament negotiations. In the period that followed, the United Nations General Assembly instituted UNIDIR as an autonomous entity within the United Nations (UN), enabling its work to be conducted in scientific independence. Currently UNIDIR conducts independent research on pressing global challenges related to disarmament, weapons control and international security. Furthermore UNIDIR engages in the comprehensive examination of both, current and emerging security issues, addressing a wide range of topics including tactical nuclear armaments, refugee protection, cyber conflict, regional confidence-building initiatives, and small arms control.

Faculties

Seeking to promote international peace, enhance global security, and support effective disarmament efforts, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research committee is authorized to:

- Conduct, support and promote depth research on current and emerging global threats;
- Extend and reinforce international or regional norms against Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their proliferation;
- Foster regional disarmament dialogues and frameworks to address international security concerns through multilateral cooperation;

- Launch emergency protocols to prevent the development or usage of WMDs in warfare or extremist groups;
- Formulate recommendations and strategic guidance for the committee Member States and UN relevant bodies, including the United Nations General Assembly;
- Develop and deploy integrated verification, intelligence, and security mechanisms to monitor arms control compliance and counter WMD proliferation.

Topic A

Measures to Address the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic with Emphasis on Compliance with the International Disarmament Regime

By:

Introduction

The use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic has become one of the most persistent and well-documented breaches of international disarmament norms in the 21st century. Since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011, various investigative mechanisms, such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), have confirmed multiple instances of toxic agent deployment against civilian targets. These actions directly contravene¹ Syria's Arab Republic obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which it joined in 2013 and raise serious questions about the effectiveness of global verification and enforcement systems. The recurrence of such violations amid a complex civil war has not only caused immediate humanitarian consequences but also exposed significant structural vulnerabilities in international arms control.

The inability of the international community to respond decisively has been shaped, in large part, by geopolitical divisions among major powers and the resulting blockage within the United Nations Security Council. Strategic alliances, selective enforcement and fragmented political will have prevented a unified multilateral reaction to repeated breaches of international law. This context has enabled the continued use of chemical agents with limited consequences, undermining the credibility of the CWC and setting a dangerous precedent for future conflicts. This case not only illustrates the operational and legal challenges associated with the use of chemical weapons in contemporary armed conflicts, but also underscores the importance of sustained research, institutional vigilance and multilateral cooperation in preserving the integrity of the international disarmament regime.

The Syrian Conflict Political and Historical Background

¹**Contravene:** Violate the prohibition or order of (a law, treaty, or code of conduct). (Oxford Languages, 2025)

The Syrian Arab Republic had been governed by the Assad Regime since 1971, after Hafez al-Assad, the Syrian expresident, took control by a military coup². In 2000, when Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian expresident, succeeded his father he continued with an authoritarian regime as well as a centralized government, employing surveillance, censorship³, arbitrary detention and violence, giving rise to economic inequality, corruption and repression. In the course of the early 2010s there was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings and armed rebellions that spread across the Arab Region, known as the Arab Spring, during which peaceful demonstrations surged in the Syrian Arab Republic in March of 2011, asking for democratic reforms. As a consequence, the Syrian government suppressed violently demonstrators making use of mass arrests and torture. This initial repression radicalized segments of the opposition and led to the militarization of the movement. The Free Syrian Army (FSA) emerged by the middle of 2011 as a coalition of defected⁴ soldiers and civilians aiming to overthrow the regime, initiating the Syrian Civil War.

Throughout the Syrian Civil War several actors have been involved, including gubernamental forces, opposition groups, extremist factions, Kurdish militias⁵ and international powers such as the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the Republic of Turkey. The increasing complexity and fragmentation of the conflict propitiated humanitarian violations, including the use of illicit chemical weapons. This multiplicity of actors has transformed the problem, where regional and global powers pursue competing strategic interests. The Russian Federation has provided military and diplomatic support to the Assad government, while the United States of America initially backed moderate opposition forces and later prioritized operations against extremist groups. The armed conflict

² **Coup**: A sudden, violent, and unlawful seizure of power from a government. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

³ **Censorship**: the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

⁴ **Defected**: To abandon one's country or cause in favor of an opposing one. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

⁵ **Militias**: A military force that is raised from the civil population to supplement a regular army in an emergency. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

has weakened state institutions, eroded civilian protections and facilitated the erosion of international norms, particularly those established under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which prohibits the use of chemical agents in armed conflict.

Patterns and Documentation of Chemical Weapons Usage in the Syrian Arab Republic

As the Syrian Civil War progressed, numerous chemical weapons attacks were confirmed by international bodies, including the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its affiliated mechanisms: the Fact Finding Mission (FFM), the OPCW UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). These attacks demonstrate the continued use of banned chemical agents across various regions of the state, particularly in areas held by opposition forces. The first large-scale incident occurred on August 21, 2013, in Eastern Ghouta, where Sarin gas⁶ was deployed. According to the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, biomedical and environmental evidence confirmed the use of a nerve agent⁷. Furthermore the mission determined over 1,000 casualties including a considerable number of minors. The report prompted international diplomatic pressure for the Syrian Arab Republic to commit to the dismantlement of its chemical arsenal under the OPCW supervision.

Despite the disarmament framework, further attacks were documented and attributed. On April 4, 2017, in the town of Khan Shaykhun, another Sarin gas attack occurred, resulting in at least 80 casualties and hundreds of injured victims. According to the OPCW-UN JIM, forensic analysis of crater impact, munitions remnants and environmental samples, in

⁶**Sarin Gas:** Sarin (military designation GB) is a nerve agent that is one of the most toxic of the known chemical warfare agents. It is generally odorless and tasteless. (The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health NIOSH, 2023)

⁷ **Nerve Agent:** A toxic, usually odorless organophosphate (such as sarin, tabun, or VX) that disrupts the transmission of nerve impulses by inhibiting cholinesterase and especially acetylcholinesterase and is used as a chemical weapon in gaseous or liquid form (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2024)

combination with testimonies from medical personnel and witnesses, led to the conclusion that the attack was conducted by the Syrian Arab Air Force using an aerial bomb. A year later, on April 7, 2018, the city of Douma, in Eastern Ghouta, was the site of another chemical incident. The OPCW FFM found that chlorine gas⁸ was released from two gas cylinders discovered at the scene, in 2023 the OPCW IIT formally attributed the attack to the Syrian government forces, citing trajectory simulations and damage analysis that indicated aerial deployment from helicopters.

In addition, other confirmed cases indicate the broader range of chemical weapons usage within the conflict. On February 4, 2018, in the town of Saraqib, the IIT attributed the release of chlorine gas to a Syrian Air Force helicopter based on technical forensics and munition assessments. Meanwhile, on August 21, 2015, in Marea, located in northern Syria, an attack involving sulfur mustard⁹ was confirmed by the OPCW FFM, with clinical symptoms and chemical analysis indicating exposure to a blistering¹⁰ agent. Unlike other incidents, this attack was attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), marking one of the first confirmed uses of chemical weapons by a non-state armed group in the Syrian conflict. These events highlight a persistent and deliberate use of chemical agents by multiple parties, establishing a record of violations that challenge the effectiveness of the international disarmament regime.

Operational Strategies, Illicit Production and Chemical Weapons Supply Chain

In addition to the confirmed use of chemical agents in specific incidents, these acts are supported by operational structures that include strategic deployment patterns, clandestine

⁸ **Chlorine Gas:** Chlorine gas is a greenish-yellow gas with a pungent, irritating odor, belonging to the halogen group of elements. It is a toxic and corrosive substance that can cause severe respiratory and eye irritation. (Britannica, 2025)

⁹**Sulfur Mustard:** Sulfur mustard, commonly known as "mustard gas", is a chemical warfare agent and a vesicant, meaning it causes blistering on contact with skin and mucous membranes. (Chemical Emergencies, 2024)

¹⁰ **Blistering:** extremely hot. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025)

production techniques and logistical networks for storage and transportation. In the context of the Syrian conflict, chemical weapons have been employed as part of calculated military strategies aimed at securing territorial gains, suppressing resistance and destabilizing both military and civilian environments. Their use has frequently coincided with moments of strategic vulnerability or retreat, particularly in densely populated opposition-held areas. Documented cases reveal that agents such as chlorine and sarin were often released in coordination with conventional air strikes¹¹, increasing chaos on the ground and hindering¹² emergency medical responses. The delivery systems, including barrel bombs, air-dropped cylinders and adapted munitions, suggest deliberate targeting of enclosed or fortified locations, such as hospitals, shelters and tunnel networks.

Furthermore, the production of weaponized chemicals by both state and non-state actors in the Syrian Arab Republic has frequently involved illicit channels, including the diversion of dual-use¹³ industrial chemicals, the repurposing of pharmaceutical or agricultural facilities and the establishment of concealed¹⁴ laboratories within conflict zones. Investigations by the OPCW IIT have revealed instances where declared chemical stockpiles were incomplete and where certain chemical precursors, particularly those used to synthesize sarin and mustard gas, were either retained in violation of disarmament agreements or acquired through unauthorized suppliers. In the case of non-state groups such as ISIL, the production process often relies on improvised methods, using commercially available materials and technical manuals accessed through digital platforms. These operations, although less sophisticated than state programs, have proved to have a high scale impact. The lack of effective oversight in conflict zones, combined with vulnerable borders and weak

¹¹ **Air strikes:** an attack made by aircraft. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

¹² **Hindering:** create difficulties for (someone or something), resulting in delay or obstruction. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

¹³ **Dual use:** goods, software and technology that can be used for both civilian and military applications. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

¹⁴ **Concealed :** kept secret; hidden. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

regulatory enforcement, has enabled the continuation of clandestine production with limited risk of detection.

Once produced, the storage and distribution of chemical agents within the State follows clandestine patterns intended to avoid international monitoring and complicate attribution. Evidence collected by the OPCW, along with the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Syrian Archive (SA), suggests that chemical munitions have been stored in dispersed facilities, including military bases, civilian infrastructure and mobile units, in order to reduce the visibility and vulnerability of arsenals. In several cases, delivery systems and chemical agents were transported separately and assembled shortly before deployment, allowing perpetrators to maintain operational flexibility and obscure logistical traces. These mobility strategies reflect a deliberate effort to undermine the verification mechanisms established under international disarmament frameworks.

Violations of International Norms and Legal Obligations

The Syrian Arab Republic's use of toxic warfare agents constitutes clear violations of several binding¹⁵ international instruments, including the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the United Nations Security Council (SC) Resolution 2118. According to the text of Resolution 2118, the state was required to “secure and destroy” all its chemical weapons and related facilities under Chapter VII mandates. The Council explicitly affirmed that the use, development, production or stockpiling of chemical weapons by any party in the Syrian Region would constitute a breach of both the CWC and the resolution itself. Despite ratifying the CWC in October 2013 and agreeing to these terms, the Syrian

¹⁵ **Binding:** (of an agreement or promise) involving an obligation that cannot be broken. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

Arab Republic continued to use agents such as the previously mentioned, sarin and chlorine, with international bodies repeatedly confirming such deployments after its formal adherence.

Moreover, Syria's initial declaration of its chemical weapons stockpile has been found to be incomplete and inaccurate by multiple oversight entities. According to the OPCW Technical Secretariat, unresolved discrepancies¹⁶ persist across at least 19 declaration issues and Syria's declaration "cannot be considered accurate and complete." The United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs highlighted that these gaps involve potentially large quantities of weaponized agents that were never declared, underscoring a failure to meet transparency obligations under Article III of the CWC. Such omissions have significant legal weight, as the concealment or retention of undeclared chemical materials is itself a breach of the Convention and undermines the integrity of the declared elimination process.

In addition, the Syrian government has obstructed international verification and investigative efforts, which is inconsistent with its obligations under Security Council resolutions and the CWC. According to the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, repeated delays, denials of access to key sites and tightly controlled visits indicate systemic non-cooperation¹⁷. Security Council Resolution 2235 (2015) established the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) with a mandate to identify perpetrators of chemical attacks and called for "full cooperation" from the Syrian authorities. Although investigative reports have repeatedly documented restricted access to airbases, storage facilities and delivery sites, which hindered¹⁸ comprehensive forensic analysis and prolonged the attribution process.

¹⁶ **Discrepancies:** A lack of compatibility or similarity between two or more facts. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

¹⁷ **Systemic Non-Cooperation:** Systemic non-cooperation refers to a widespread and organized refusal to cooperate with a particular system, institution, or authority, often as a form of protest or resistance. (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2023)

¹⁸ **Hindered:** create difficulties for (someone or something), resulting in delay or obstruction. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

These multiple layers of non-compliance¹⁹, ranging from continued use of chemical agents to incomplete declarations and obstruction of verification, represent serious violations not only of legal obligations, but also of the norm that prohibits the use of chemical weapons universally. As stated by the Security Council records, Syria's infraction under Chapter VII mandates warranted collective measures in response to these breaches. The persistence of these violations over more than a decade has eroded the credibility of the international disarmament regime, demonstrating that without effective enforcement and cooperation, foundational treaties such as the CWC may be incapable of preventing or deterring chemical warfare.

The Role of Major Powers and Political Deadlock

The involvement of major powers in the Syrian conflict has significantly influenced the international response to the confirmed use of chemical weapons, particularly through persistent deadlock²⁰ within the United Nations Security Council. According to official UN records, at least five draft resolutions addressing toxic warfare agents used in the Syrian Arab Republic, including those proposing sanctions, referrals to the International Criminal Court or support for extended investigations, have been blocked by the Russian Federation, often with support from the People's Republic of China. The Russian Federation, as a permanent member of the Council and a military ally of the Syrian government, has exercised its veto power²¹ to prevent resolutions that could result in punitive action or formal attribution of responsibility. This political impasse has directly impacted the renewal of accountability mechanisms, most notably leading to the termination of the OPCW–UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in 2017, despite its proven operational capacity and ongoing investigations at the time.

¹⁹ **Non Compliance:** Failure or refusal to comply with something (such as a rule or regulation). (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2022)

²⁰ **Deadlock:** a situation, typically one involving opposing parties, in which no progress can be made. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

²¹ **Veto Power:** The power of one person or body to prohibit a course of action chosen by another. (Legal Information Institute, 2019)

Furthermore, the direct involvement of major powers in the Syrian conflict has contributed to an environment in which the use of chemical agents has persisted and in some cases, intensified. The Russian Federation has provided substantial military and logistical support to the Syrian government, including the deployment of air forces, intelligence sharing and the supply of advanced weapons systems, which has strengthened the operational capacity of state forces, including during periods associated with chemical attacks. At the same time, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the French Republic have engaged in selective military interventions, such as targeted airstrikes following confirmed chemical incidents, while simultaneously supporting opposition factions through political and material means. These opposing alliances have deepened the fragmentation of the conflict and have reduced the space for neutral and unified international responses to violations of disarmament obligations. In this context, the presence and strategic interests of external powers have not acted as a deterrent to the use of toxic agents, but rather as a factor contributing to their continued employment within a broader geopolitical confrontation.

The entrenchment of major powers within opposing sides of the Syrian conflict has not only paralyzed diplomatic coordination but has also transformed the issue of weapons employing toxic substances into a secondary concern within a larger struggle for regional influence. As the Russian Federation reinforces its strategic footprint in the Eastern Mediterranean through military installations and long-term bilateral agreements with Damascus, and as Western powers prioritize counterterrorism operations and containment of regional instability, the enforcement of chemical disarmament norms has become subordinated to broader geopolitical agendas. According to various policy assessments, including those presented by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the International Crisis Group, the disparity in objectives among international

actors has contributed to a selective and inconsistent response to confirmed chemical incidents. Thus, this has created an environment where strategic calculations outweigh²² normative commitments and where the response to chemical weapons use is shaped more by the interests of sponsoring states than by adherence to international law.

UNIDIR's Current Analytical Position and the Global Significance of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Crisis

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has addressed the Syrian chemical weapons crisis primarily through research and policy analysis aimed at improving the effectiveness of the international disarmament regime. While it has not conducted investigations or issued political judgments, UNIDIR uses the Syrian case as a reference point to explore systemic challenges within compliance, verification and enforcement structures. Its publications examine how geopolitical interests, institutional fragmentation and limited access to affected areas have weakened the practical application of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). By providing neutral, evidence-based insights, the Institute informs UN member states, disarmament practitioners and policy-makers on the structural vulnerabilities exposed by Syria. UNIDIR's work plays a key role in shaping long-term strategies that strengthen international cooperation, institutional resilience and legal clarity within the disarmament framework.

UNIDIR has highlighted the Syrian chemical weapons crisis poses a clear threat to international peace, civilian protection and the future of multilateral disarmament. Its recurrence has weakened the normative force of the CWC and has demonstrated how political divisions can override legal consensus in addressing weapons of mass destruction. The normalization of chemical warfare within an unresolved civil conflict risks encouraging

²² **Outweigh:** to be greater or more important than something else. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025)

both state and non-state actors to pursue similar tactics in other regions. In the absence of coordinated and sustained international response, the deterrent value of existing disarmament treaties continues to erode. For these reasons, the Syrian case demands ongoing international attention, not only to address past violations, but to preserve the viability of collective security mechanisms and the universal norm against chemical weapons use.

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Topic B

Approaches to Strengthening Nuclear
Non-Proliferation in the Middle East with
Focus on Adherence to International Norms

By: AUTHOR 1

Introduction

The nuclear non-proliferation regime in the Middle East has weakened over time due to asymmetries in treaty participation, the absence of regional legal instruments and shifting geopolitical dynamics. Israel's State status as a nuclear-armed state outside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), combined with Iran's Islamic Republic expanding nuclear program and reduced transparency since the collapse of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has contributed to a fragile regional security environment. Multilateral efforts to establish a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (MENWFZ) have repeatedly failed, while international verification mechanisms face both political and logistical limitations in the region. These conditions have challenged the effectiveness of traditional arms control tools and increased the risk of further proliferation and confrontation.

Recent developments, including the June 2025 military confrontation between the State of Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran, have illustrated how unresolved nuclear disputes may escalate into broader conflicts involving critical infrastructure and regional alliances. In parallel, technical constraints on monitoring, legal asymmetries in verification obligations, and the lack of institutional coordination have limited the ability of international organizations to detect and prevent non-compliance. Within this context, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) plays a key role in supporting disarmament dialogue, producing technical assessments and proposing confidence-building measures to address regional threats.

Regional Background and Factors Contributing to the Erosion of the Non-Proliferation Regime

The Middle East has faced persistent challenges to the integrity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, rooted in historical dynamics, which date back to the early years of

the nuclear era, since 1945. According to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the State of Israel initiated its nuclear program in the 1950s with covert²³ assistance from external partners and is widely believed to have developed an operational nuclear arsenal by the late 60s, although its capability has never been acknowledged officially. This undeclared status outside the framework²⁴ NPT has created an enduring perception of strategic inequality among Arab states, many of which have publicly criticized the international community's limited response to Israel's nuclear ambiguity. Since the 1970s, various initiatives at the United Nations (UN) have aimed to establish a MENWFZ, but deep political divisions and regional rivalries have repeatedly obstructed progress, leaving the region without a binding²⁵ agreement to restrict the spread of nuclear weapons.

The historical context of arms control efforts further illustrates the gradual erosion²⁶ of non-proliferation norms in the Middle East. Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran initially ceased its nuclear program, but concerns about regional security and the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s contributed to the resumption of nuclear activities in the 1990s. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), by the early 2000s Iran's Islamic Republic nuclear ambitions became a focal point of international diplomacy, culminating in the 2015 JCPOA, which established strict limits on Iran's state nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. Despite this, the withdrawal of the United States of America from the JCPOA in 2018 reversed years of negotiations, and the Islamic Republic of Iran subsequently began expanding its uranium²⁷ enrichment levels beyond the thresholds²⁸ set in the agreement, raising concerns about the potential production of

²³ **Covert:** not openly acknowledged or displayed. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

²⁴ **Framework:** a basic structure underlying a system, concept, or text. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

²⁵ **Binding:** (of an agreement or promise) involving an obligation that cannot be broken. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

²⁶ **Erosion:** The fact of a good quality or situation being gradually lost or destroyed. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025)

²⁷ **Uranium:** A chemical element that is a heavy, radioactive metal, used in the production of nuclear power and in some types of nuclear weapon. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

²⁸ **Thresholds:** The magnitude or intensity that must be exceeded for a certain reaction, phenomenon, result, or condition to occur or be manifested. (Oxford Languages, 2025).

weapons-grade material and further weakening trust in the effectiveness of multilateral arms control mechanisms.

In addition, longstanding state level dynamics and regional conflicts have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the non-proliferation regime by fostering instability and opening avenues for the illicit transfer of nuclear related materials. Reports by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) indicate that the proliferation risks have been amplified by the consequences of historical conflicts, such as the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War, Israel’s State strikes on suspected nuclear facilities in the Republic of Iraq (1981) and the Syrian Arab Republic (2007), as well as repeated military engagements involving Iranian-aligned groups across the Lebanese Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Iraq. These historical events constitute a pattern of preemptive²⁹ actions and escalations that have contributed to an enduring security dilemma in which states perceive nuclear capabilities as essential for deterrence³⁰. This environment, marked by decades of mistrust and the absence of durable arms control agreements, continues to erode the foundation of the NPT in the Middle East and complicates efforts to build sustainable regional security frameworks.

The Role of Israel’s Undeclared Nuclear Arsenal in Regional Strategic Imbalances

Israel’s State undeclared nuclear arsenal has been a central factor in shaping the security dynamics of the Middle East and remains a persistent challenge to the credibility of the global non-proliferation regime. In accordance with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the State of Israel is estimated to possess approximately 80 to 90 nuclear warheads³¹, although it maintains a policy of deliberate ambiguity by neither

²⁹ **Preemptive:** Serving or intended to preempt or forestall something, especially to prevent attack by disabling the enemy. (Oxford Languages, 2023)

³⁰ **Deterrence:** The action of discouraging an action or event through instilling doubt or fear of the consequences. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

³¹ **Warheads:** The front part of a bomb or missile that contains explosives. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025)

confirming nor denying the existence of its nuclear weapons. This unique stance has enabled the state to deter potential adversaries while avoiding the political and legal responsibilities associated with being recognized as a nuclear armed state under the NPT. The country's non-membership in the NPT and its exemption from international inspections have led to perceptions of a double standard in the application of non-proliferation norms in the region.

The absence of official acknowledgment or detailed information about Israel's State nuclear capabilities has limited opportunities for meaningful dialogue on regional arms control, as states have been unable to engage in negotiations based on verified facts or mutual confidence. As stated by UNIDIR, this opacity has discouraged neighboring countries from committing to initiatives aimed at reducing nuclear risks, since they cannot reliably assess Israel's State strategic posture or intentions. Consequently, efforts to establish mechanisms for transparency, verification or parallel security assurances have repeatedly stalled³², preventing progress toward collective measures such as a MENWFZ. This lack of verifiable data continues to impede trust building processes that are essential for advancing comprehensive regional non-proliferation frameworks.

Furthermore, efforts to address Israel's State atomic status through international forums have consistently encountered political and diplomatic obstacles, reflecting the interplay of global strategic interests. Citing records from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), resolutions calling for Israel to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under full scope safeguards have been introduced at multiple sessions of the IAEA General Conference but have failed to secure consensus³³ among member states, often due to opposition from major powers. This stalemate has reinforced perceptions among regional actors that the non-proliferation regime is selectively enforced, weakening the normative power of the NPT and complicating efforts to foster regional confidence-building measures.

³² **Stalled:** Stop or cause to stop making progress. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

³³ **Consensus:** A generally accepted opinion or decision among a group of people. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023)

The continued ambiguity surrounding Israel's nuclear arsenal remains a significant barrier to establishing a balanced and credible non-proliferation framework in the Middle East.

The Collapse of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its Impact on Regional Non Proliferation Norms

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed in 2015 between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany, known as the P5+1³⁴, was considered a foundation agreement to limit Iran's Islamic Republic nuclear activities and restore international confidence in the non-proliferation regime. According to the IAEA, the Islamic Republic of Iran complied with the restrictions set under the JCPOA from its implementation in 2016 until mid-2018, including reducing its stockpile of enriched uranium, dismantling excess centrifuges³⁵ and granting access to inspections. These measures extended the state breakout time for producing weapons-grade material to more than one year, significantly lowering the risk of a near-term nuclear crisis. The agreement was widely regarded as an example of successful multilateral diplomacy addressing regional proliferation concerns.

The unilateral decision by the United States of America to withdraw from the JCPOA in May 2018, as announced by the President Donald Trump, during his first administration, marked a turning point in the stability of non-proliferation norms in the Middle East. Following the reimposition of economic sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran gradually reduced its compliance with the agreement by increasing the level and quantity of its uranium enrichment and limiting the IAEA's verification activities. According to the IAEA's quarterly

³⁴ **P5+1:** The P5+1 refers to a coalition of six world powers engaged in negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear program. This group includes the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—along with Germany. (EBSCO, 2023)

³⁵ **Centrifuges:** A machine with a rapidly rotating container that applies centrifugal force to its contents, typically to separate fluids of different densities (e.g. cream from milk) or liquids from solids. (Oxford Languages, 2023)

reports, by 2025 Iran had amassed more than 90 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 60%, a quantity far beyond the limits allowed under the JCPOA and dangerously close to weapons-grade levels. These developments have severely undermined the credibility of international non-proliferation agreements, as they demonstrated the fragility of political commitments in the absence of sustained multilateral support.

The collapse of the JCPOA has had broader implications for regional and international non-proliferation efforts, as it exposed vulnerabilities in the durability of negotiated agreements when political contexts shift. According to the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), the experience of the JCPOA's termination has prompted concerns among states evaluating security-related negotiations, highlighting the need for mechanisms that can ensure the continuity of commitments across changes in national leadership. The perception that agreements may be unilaterally abandoned has undermined confidence in diplomatic processes as a reliable means to resolve proliferation crises. This erosion of trust has further complicated initiatives aimed at establishing cooperative security frameworks in the Middle East, making it more difficult to secure support for new arms control measures and diminishing the effectiveness of non-proliferation norms intended to prevent the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

The Twelve Day Conflict and its Implications

The Twelve Day conflict began on June 13, 2025, it was triggered by a series of Israeli airstrikes against Iranian nuclear facilities, including sites at Fordow and Natanz, which Israeli authorities stated were accelerating uranium enrichment in violation of previous agreements. According to reports by the International Crisis Group (ICG), these attacks were coordinated with logistical and intelligence support from the United States of America, which

deployed additional aircraft³⁶ and missile defense systems to regional bases in anticipation of Iranian retaliation³⁷. The Islamic Republic of Iran responded by launching more than 150 ballistic missiles and over 100 armed drones targeting Israeli cities, military installations and critical infrastructure, actions that resulted in significant damage to transportation networks, energy facilities and military assets. Throughout the initial days of the conflict, exchanges of fire intensified, with both sides issuing public statements accusing each other of escalating tensions and threatening broader military action.

During the middle phase of the conflict, from June 17 to June 21, 2025, hostilities expanded as the Islamic Republic of Iran targeted United States of America positions in the Persian Gulf, including airbases in the State of Qatar and naval assets in the Strait of Hormuz, according to assessments by UNODA. The State of Israel continued conducting airstrikes on suspected missile launch sites and command centers in Iranian territory, while also engaging with Hezbollah and other groups aligned with Iran operating in southern Lebanon and Syria. Civilian areas in multiple locations experienced power outages, communication disruptions, and shortages of essential goods due to damage to infrastructure and logistical blockades. Attempts by European Union mediators to broker a temporary ceasefire were unsuccessful during this period, as both governments maintained demands that the other halt military operations unilaterally before negotiations could begin.

The Establishment of a Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ)

The concept of a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (MENWFZ) has been under discussion at the United Nations since 1974, when the Arab Republic Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran joined, and proposed its creation as a means to prevent further nuclear

³⁶ **Aircraft:** Any vehicle, with or without an engine, that can fly, such as a plane or helicopter. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025)

³⁷ **Retaliation:** The act of hurting someone or doing something harmful to someone because they have done or said something harmful to you. (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2025)

proliferation in the region. As stated by UNODA, the initiative aimed to promote collective security by prohibiting the development, acquisition or deployment of WMDs by any state in the Middle East. Despite receiving broad support from most regional and global actors, the initiative has failed to materialize due to longstanding political divisions and the absence of trust among key participants. Israel's State refusal to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons NPT and its policy of nuclear ambiguity have been cited by several states as major obstacles to initiating substantive negotiations on the zone.

The most notable attempt to institutionalize the MENWFZ occurred in 2010, when the NPT Review Conference adopted a final document calling for a conference on the establishment of the zone, to be held in 2012. The planned conference was indefinitely postponed due to disagreements among regional actors, particularly over the inclusion of the State of Israel and the sequencing of regional security issues. In 2019, under the guidance of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), a new series of annual conferences was launched to advance discussions on the MENWFZ, yet the State of Israel and the United States of America chose not to participate, citing concerns over the process and the political climate. As maintained by UNODA, while these conferences have allowed participating states to reaffirm their support for the zone, they have not led to the negotiation of a legally binding instrument or the establishment of a preparatory committee. The absence of a comprehensive approach that includes all regional powers continues to prevent meaningful progress.

Additionally, the lack of consensus on the MENWFZ has also had institutional consequences, particularly for the credibility of international disarmament mechanisms in the region. According to analysis by the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO), the repeated failure to convene inclusive negotiations has undermined confidence in the role of global frameworks such as the NPT and the IAEA in addressing regional security issues.

Furthermore, the exclusion of civil society and regional disarmament experts from formal processes has limited the space for innovative proposals as well as approaches that could complement official diplomacy. Proposals to link the MENWFZ to broader regional security arrangements, including confidence-building measures, conventional arms control and diplomatic normalization, have been discussed but remain largely undeveloped in formal settings.

Verification and Monitoring Challenges in the Middle East

The effectiveness of international verification mechanisms in the Middle East has been significantly constrained by technical and logistical limitations that go beyond political disagreements. As explained by IAEA, its ability to monitor nuclear activities relies heavily on the physical presence of inspectors, access to declared facilities and the operation of surveillance equipment. In contexts where security conditions are unstable, such as in conflict zones like the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Yemen, the agency faces substantial obstacles in deploying personnel or maintaining uninterrupted data collection. In addition, in countries where atomic sites are dispersed across multiple locations, the logistical burden³⁸ monitoring can exceed the resources available to international organizations, leading to coverage gaps. These challenges weaken the overall reliability of the verification system, even when legal agreements are in place.

Besides, technological constraints have also affected the capacity of monitoring agencies to detect and respond to undeclared nuclear activities in real time. Although the IAEA has increasingly adopted satellite imagery, environmental sampling and remote sensing tools, the effectiveness of these technologies is limited when states delay reporting, restrict equipment installations or operate clandestine facilities. According to a report by the

³⁸ **Burden:** Something difficult or unpleasant that you have to deal with or worry about. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025)

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the detection of covert enrichment or reprocessing activities still depends on cooperation from the host country, which may not always be available. The limited number of trained personnel, combined with the high costs associated with continuous technological surveillance, further restricts the agency's ability to ensure consistent verification coverage across the region. These structural limitations leave open the possibility of undetected violations of non-proliferation commitments.

A further logistical difficulty arises from the lack of harmonized verification standards across states in the region. While some states have signed and ratified the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreements, which allows for more intrusive and comprehensive inspections, others have not adopted it or apply it selectively. This discrepancy creates an uneven monitoring landscape, where some programs are subject to high scrutiny³⁹ while others remain largely opaque⁴⁰. As outlined by UNODA, this technical and procedural asymmetry contributes to a fragmented verification regime that complicates the detection of non-compliance and reduces the transparency needed to support broader disarmament efforts.

International Response and Diplomatic Opportunities

International actors have responded to the erosion of the non-proliferation regime in the Middle East through a combination of bilateral diplomacy, multilateral engagement and institutional initiatives. Following the collapse of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the European Union (EU) launched a series of diplomatic efforts to preserve dialogue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the remaining parties to the agreement, known as the E3/EU+2 format. In accordance with the European External Action Service (EEAS), these meetings have included proposals for phased sanctions relief and renewed enrichment limits, but progress has been hindered by mutual distrust and unresolved technical

³⁹ **Scrutiny:** Critical observation or examination. (Oxford Languages, 2024)

⁴⁰ **Opaque:** Not transparent. (Oxford Languages, 2025)

disputes. The United Nations has continued to support efforts through the IAEA and by promoting inclusive discussions within the framework of the General Assembly, including the annual conferences on the establishment of a MENWFZ. Despite these efforts, the absence of consensus among regional powers has limited the effectiveness of international responses.

At the same time, major global powers such as the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation have pursued their own diplomatic channels in the region, often focusing on strategic and economic partnerships rather than arms control. According to SIPRI, the People's Republic of China has positioned itself as a potential mediator by maintaining relations with both the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, while the Russian Federation has used its military and political influence in the Arab State of Syria and Iran's Islamic Republic to shape regional security dynamics. These actors have expressed support for non-proliferation in principle, but their initiatives have not yet resulted in binding disarmament frameworks or multilateral verification mechanisms. The United States of America has also signaled interest in reviving a modified nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran, yet domestic political divisions and regional opposition have complicated the negotiation process. As a result, the international landscape remains fragmented, with uncoordinated efforts that have produced limited tangible outcomes.

Despite the complexity of the regional landscape, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has contributed to international efforts by providing technical analysis, policy recommendations and regional engagement platforms aimed at strengthening non-proliferation norms. Through its research programs, UNIDIR has examined the implications of regional asymmetries in nuclear capability, the limitations of existing verification mechanisms and the risks associated with emerging technologies such as cyber operations and dual-use materials. The institute has also supported regional dialogues

by convening expert consultations, policy workshops and track II diplomacy initiatives involving officials and civil society actors from the Middle East. In recent years, UNIDIR has advocated for confidence-building measures such as regional data-sharing mechanisms, joint verification capacity-building and the integration of nuclear risk reduction into broader security discussions. These contributions reflect the institute's mandate to reinforce multilateral disarmament processes through research, dialogue, and policy support, and demonstrate its potential to facilitate the restoration of a credible non-proliferation regime in the region.

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Glossary of Forbidden Words

Forbidden Words

Defined by the United Nations, are non diplomatic terms participants must avoid to mention during their speeches on the debate and in the writing of resolution projects

Forbidden Words	Permitted equivalents
First world countries	Developed countries
Third world countries	Developing countries
Gay ⁴¹	Member of the LGBTIQ+ community
War ⁴²	Belic conflict
Rape	Sexual abuse
Terrorist	Extremist
Kill or murder	Deprive someone of their life
Death	Casualties
Assassination	Homicide
Army	Military forces
Money	Economic resources
Poor	Lack of resources
Okay	Yes or agree
Black ⁴³	Afrodescendant

⁴¹ The word Gay is replaced by a more inclusive term, recognizing that not all people within the LGBTIQ+ community identify in the same way.

⁴² The word War can be used in order to refer to historical contexts, such as the Cold War, the First World War, etc. It can only be used in the Security Council to refer to armed conflicts.

⁴³ The word Black, in reference to ethnicity, is not prohibited but it is recommended to limit its use and refer to this sector as a dark-skinned person or afrodescendant as the case may be.

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Glossary for Resolution Projects

Preambulatory Phrases

Preambulatory Phrases are used at the beginning of every Resolution Paper in order to give context about the resolutions made for the topic. Preambulatory Phrases must be written in italics followed by a sentence that gives said context. For each Resolution Paper there must be five sentences beginning with a Preambulatory Phrase.

Affirming	Desiring	Noting with deep concern
Alarmed by	Emphasizing	Noting with satisfaction
Approving	Expecting	Noting further
Bearing in mind	Expressing its appreciation	Observing
Believing	Fulfilling	Reaffirming
Confident	Fully aware	Realizing
Contemplating	Further deploring	Recalling
Convinced	Further recalling	Recognizing
Declaring	Guided by	Referring
Deeply concerned	Having adopted	Seeking
Deeply conscious	Having considered	Taking into consideration
Deeply convinced	Having examined	Taking note
Deeply disturbed	Having received	Viewing with appreciation
Deeply regretting	Keeping in mind	Welcoming

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Glossary for Resolution Projects

Operative Clauses

Operative Clauses are used at the beginning of every resolution within the Resolution Paper on the debated topic. They must be written in italics and bold.

Accepts	Endorses	Notes
Affirms	Draws the attentions	Proclaims
Approves	Emphasizes	Reaffirms
Authorizes	Encourages	Recommends
Calls	Expresses its appreciation	Regrets
Calls upon	Expresses its hope	Reminds
Condemns	Further invites	Requests
Confirms	Further proclaims	Solemnly
Congratulates	Further reminds	Affirms
Considers	Further recommends	Strongly
Declares accordingly	Further requests	condemns
Deplores	Further resolves	Supports
Designates	Has resolved	Takes note of
		Transmits
		Trusts

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.