



## General Assembly

Thirteenth Session

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### First Committee – Disarmament and International Security

This committee aims to create a more peaceful world. Talks in this committee center around reducing weapons in the world. It also identifies threats to peace and finds solutions to international security.

This committee believes the world can become stable through cooperation. Countries can protect their people better if they work together for peace. For example, this committee might discuss how to keep weapons from terrorists. Or, how less weapons can make the world safer. Also, countries talk about policing weapons and finding ways to reduce the weapons they have.

**First Committee** works closely with **United Nations Disarmament Commission** and **Conference on Disarmament**. They have passed resolutions on ammunition, military spending and missiles.

### Agenda Item 102 – The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

#### Focus Questions

A Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East would do a lot to ease tensions. It would also make the area safer. With your fellow delegates you need to find a way to work towards making a NWFZ in the Middle East.

- How can your country play a role in making the Middle East a safer place with less violence?
- How can the countries in this region work together to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone?
- Why do some states want nuclear weapons and how can other states help them so it is not something they want?

#### Background

Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction that cause more damage than traditional bombs. A small nuclear weapon can destroy an entire city. They have only been used twice in history. At the end of World War II, the U.S. dropped two nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. These two bombings caused the deaths of more than 129 000 people.

Many countries saw the danger of nuclear weapons. However, some countries made nuclear weapons because they thought they might need them. They thought they needed them for protection. The first five countries to develop nuclear weapons were the US, Russia (former Soviet Union), the United Kingdom, France and China. Since 1961 at least three more countries have made nuclear weapons. There are now around 22 000 nuclear weapons in our world.

## Background

Nuclear disarmament is something the UN has always wanted. In 1961 the General Assembly adopted a resolution that said the use of nuclear weapons “*cause indiscriminate suffering and destruction to mankind and civilization and, as such, is contrary to the rules of international law and to the laws of humanity.*”

Since the 1960s the UN has been encouraging countries to make Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ). Since not all countries can agree to live without nuclear weapons, at least large areas can be safe. 115 states belong to a NWFZ.

## Recent Developments

- A nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would help to ease some of the tensions in that area of the world. The Middle East is a “conflict hotspot”. This means that there are a lot of risks for violence to happen there.
- One of the major causes of violence is the Syrian Civil War. The fighting spills into other countries and makes them unsafe as well.
- Many countries in the Middle East do not think Israel should be allowed to exist. The only states in the Middle East that have diplomatic ties with Israel are Egypt and Jordan.
- Since it became a country in 1947 Israel has fought 8 wars.
- To protect itself, many people believe Israel made nuclear weapons. Israel will not admit if they have nuclear weapons. They prefer to keep it a secret.
- In the past, Iraq, Libya and Syria tried to create nuclear weapons. Some states suspect Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons secretly.
- Iran says that they are not trying to get a nuclear weapon. However, they do admit that they are interested in nuclear power research. Nuclear research and nuclear facilities can be used to create the uranium for a nuclear weapon.
- In 2012, President Obama said “It will not be tolerable to a number of states in that region for Iran to have a nuclear weapon and then not to have a nuclear weapon ... so the threat of proliferation becomes that much more severe ... The dangers of an Iran getting nuclear weapons that then leads to a free-for-all in the Middle East is something that I think would be very dangerous for the world.”
- In 2015 President Obama with Germany, China, Russia, France, the UK and the EU negotiated a deal with Iran. It was called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The deal lifted **economic sanctions** against Iran in return for allowing International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors into the country. The agreement listed many things that Iran could not do. The inspectors were there to make sure Iran followed the rules.
- In 2018, President Trump decided to pull out of the Iran deal. He believes Iran is trying to make nuclear weapons in secret. This has made a lot more tensions. The US flag was burned in the Iranian Parliament. Iranian soldiers fired rockets into Israel from Syria. Israel responded by attacking Iranian military in Syria. Iran has said they might restart their nuclear program.
- Saudi Arabia has said that they would consider building nuclear weapons if Iran and Israel had them. This could create a lot of tension in the Middle East.

**Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

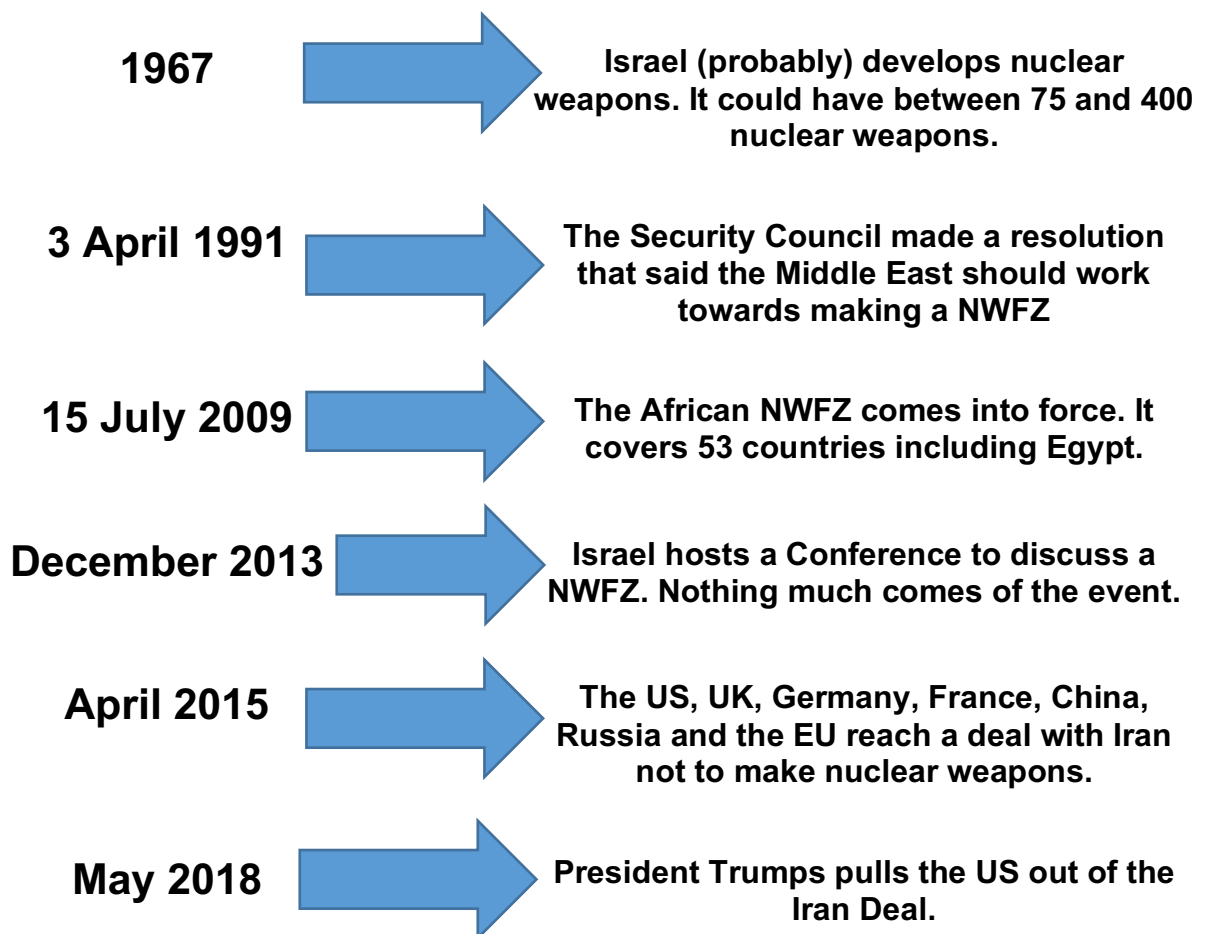
- ✓ This treaty aims to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and encourages countries to use nuclear energy peacefully.
- ✓ Aigned in 1968, only 4 states have never signed it: India, Israel, Pakistan and South Sudan.
- ✓ North Korea signed it in 1985 but left the treaty in 2003.

**Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

- ✓ This treaty would ban ALL nuclear explosions in all environments.
- ✓ Since 1945 over 2000 nuclear tests have been conducted. That is 28 tests a year!
- ✓ This treaty is not yet in force. It needs to be ratified by China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, the U.S., India, North Korea and Pakistan.

**Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

- ✓ This treaty wants to see ALL nuclear weapons banned.
- ✓ In July 2017 there was a vote and 122 states voted yes to the final draft.
- ✓ In September 2017 states were invited to sign the treaty.

**Timeline: Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone**

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## Research Questions

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1. What are the benefits of having nuclear weapons? What are the drawbacks?
2. How can countries prove to each other that their nuclear research is not a threat? How can countries trust them when they say they don't want a nuclear weapon?
3. Is it possible that countries with nuclear weapons would ever agree to getting rid of them? Why or why not?
4. How can nuclear power be used in positive ways?
5. Research some of the history of the Middle East. Why is there so much conflict there in your opinion?
6. Does your country think that nuclear weapons make the world a safer place?
7. The United States is not trusted by many countries in the Middle East. What other countries can influence the opinion of the states in the Middle East.
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. How does being a delegate from a different country help you understand this problem in your community?
10. How do the choices you make in your life help resolve this problem?

## Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
<b>UNODA</b>	<a href="https://www.un.org/disarmament/">https://www.un.org/disarmament /</a>	Official page of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs.
<b>Forbes</b>	<a href="https://www.forbes.com/sites/startswithabang/2017/09/09/ask-ethan-how-can-a-nation-have-nuclear-power-without-the-danger-of-nuclear-weapons/#6f41b94039cd">https://www.forbes.com/sites/startswithabang/2017/09/09/ask-ethan-how-can-a-nation-have-nuclear-power-without-the-danger-of-nuclear-weapons/#6f41b94039cd</a>	An article on the connection between nuclear weapons and nuclear power.
<b>Reaching Critical Will</b>	<a href="http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban">http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban</a>	Information on the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.
<b>PBS News Hour</b>	<a href="https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/what-is-the-difference-between-the-nuclear-material-in-a-bomb-versus-a-reactor">https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/what-is-the-difference-between-the-nuclear-material-in-a-bomb-versus-a-reactor</a>	Background on nuclear power and weapons.
<b>IAEA</b>	<a href="https://www.iaea.org/">https://www.iaea.org/</a>	The International Atomic Energy Agency official site.
<b>BBC</b>	<a href="http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655">http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655</a>	Information on the Iran Nuclear Deal.
<b>The Guardian</b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2018/may/08/iran-nuclear-deal-donald-trump-latest-live-updates">https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2018/may/08/iran-nuclear-deal-donald-trump-latest-live-updates</a>	Article about Donald Trump having the US leave the Iran deal.
<b>Nuclear Ban Daily</b>	<a href="http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/reports">http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/reports</a>	A list of newsletters that have information about banning nuclear weapons.
<b>ICAN</b>	<a href="http://www.icanw.org/why-a-ban/positions/">http://www.icanw.org/why-a-ban/positions/</a>	Website about the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons.