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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the First Committee

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2021, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-sixth session the item entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East” and to allocate it to the First Committee.
2. At its 1st meeting, on 30 September 2021, the First Committee, taking into consideration the physical distancing guidelines and constraints related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which prevented the Committee from organizing a full-fledged session, decided, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, to convene in-person and virtual meetings and to conduct its work in three phases. The first phase would be a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely items 92 to 107, the second phase would be dedicated to thematic discussions and the third phase would be action on all draft proposals. The Committee also decided to convene three virtual informal meetings of two hours each for interactive dialogues on specific subjects. Also at its 1st meeting, the Committee decided, on the basis of the conference room paper before it,¹ on the final composition for the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of arms control and disarmament.
3. At its 2nd to 7th meetings, from 4 to 7 and on 11 and 12 October, the Committee held a general debate. On 8, 15 and 21 October, the Committee held virtual meetings for exchanges with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, civil society, independent experts, and other high-level officials nominated by the regional groups. The Committee also held 5 meetings (8th to 12th), on 13, 14 and 18 October, for thematic discussions. At those meetings, as well as during the action phase, draft resolutions were

¹ A/C.1/76/CRP.2, available at www.un.org/en/ga/first/76/documentation76.shtml.



introduced and considered. The Committee took action on all draft resolutions and decisions at its 13th to 18th meetings, on 27 October, from 1 to 3 and on 5 November.²

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East ([A/76/190 \(Part I\)](#)).

II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.1/76/L.1](#)

5. On 1 October, the representative of Egypt submitted a draft resolution entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East” ([A/C.1/76/L.1](#)).

6. At its 13th meeting, on 27 October, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.1/76/L.1](#) by a recorded vote of 171 to 1, with 6 abstentions (see para. 7). The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Congo, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan, United States of America.

² For an account of the Committee’s discussion of the item, see [A/C.1/76/PV.2](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.3](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.4](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.5](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.6](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.7](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.8](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.9](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.10](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.11](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.12](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.13](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.14](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.15](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.16](#), [A/C.1/76/PV.17](#) and [A/C.1/76/PV.18](#), as well as [A/C.1/76/INF/5](#).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [3263 \(XXIX\)](#) of 9 December 1974, [3474 \(XXX\)](#) of 11 December 1975, [31/71](#) of 10 December 1976, [32/82](#) of 12 December 1977, [33/64](#) of 14 December 1978, [34/77](#) of 11 December 1979, [35/147](#) of 12 December 1980, [36/87](#) A and B of 9 December 1981, [37/75](#) of 9 December 1982, [38/64](#) of 15 December 1983, [39/54](#) of 12 December 1984, [40/82](#) of 12 December 1985, [41/48](#) of 3 December 1986, [42/28](#) of 30 November 1987, [43/65](#) of 7 December 1988, [44/108](#) of 15 December 1989, [45/52](#) of 4 December 1990, [46/30](#) of 6 December 1991, [47/48](#) of 9 December 1992, [48/71](#) of 16 December 1993, [49/71](#) of 15 December 1994, [50/66](#) of 12 December 1995, [51/41](#) of 10 December 1996, [52/34](#) of 9 December 1997, [53/74](#) of 4 December 1998, [54/51](#) of 1 December 1999, [55/30](#) of 20 November 2000, [56/21](#) of 29 November 2001, [57/55](#) of 22 November 2002, [58/34](#) of 8 December 2003, [59/63](#) of 3 December 2004, [60/52](#) of 8 December 2005, [61/56](#) of 6 December 2006, [62/18](#) of 5 December 2007, [63/38](#) of 2 December 2008, [64/26](#) of 2 December 2009, [65/42](#) of 8 December 2010, [66/25](#) of 2 December 2011, [67/28](#) of 3 December 2012, [68/27](#) of 5 December 2013, [69/29](#) of 2 December 2014, [70/24](#) of 7 December 2015, [71/29](#) of 5 December 2016, [72/24](#) of 4 December 2017, [73/28](#) of 5 December 2018, [74/30](#) of 12 December 2019 and [75/33](#) of 7 December 2020 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East,

Recalling also the recommendations for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East consistent with paragraphs 60 to 63, and in particular paragraph 63 (d), of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly,¹

Emphasizing the basic provisions of the above-mentioned resolutions, in which all parties directly concerned are called upon to consider taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East and, pending and during the establishment of such a zone, to declare solemnly that they will refrain, on a reciprocal basis, from producing, acquiring or in any other way possessing nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices and from permitting the stationing of nuclear weapons on their territory by any third party, to agree to place their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and to declare their support for the establishment of the zone and to deposit such declarations with the Security Council for consideration, as appropriate,

Reaffirming the inalienable right of all States to acquire and develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes,

Emphasizing the need for appropriate measures on the question of the prohibition of military attacks on nuclear facilities,

Bearing in mind the consensus reached by the General Assembly since its thirty-fifth session that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East would greatly enhance international peace and security,

¹ Resolution [S-10/2](#).

Desirous of building on that consensus so that substantial progress can be made towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East,

Welcoming all initiatives leading to general and complete disarmament, including in the region of the Middle East, and in particular on the establishment therein of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons,

Noting the peace negotiations in the Middle East, which should be of a comprehensive nature and represent an appropriate framework for the peaceful settlement of contentious issues in the region,

Recognizing the importance of credible regional security, including the establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone,

Emphasizing the essential role of the United Nations in the establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone,

Having examined the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 75/33,²

1. *Urges* all parties directly concerned seriously to consider taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and, as a means of promoting this objective, invites the countries concerned to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;³

2. *Calls upon* all countries of the region that have not yet done so, pending the establishment of the zone, to agree to place all their nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards;

3. *Takes note* of resolution GC(65)/RES/14, adopted on 23 September 2021 by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency at its sixty-fifth regular session, concerning the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East;

4. *Notes* the importance of the ongoing bilateral Middle East peace negotiations and the activities of the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security in promoting mutual confidence and security in the Middle East, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone;

5. *Invites* all countries of the region, pending the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, to declare their support for establishing such a zone, consistent with paragraph 63 (d) of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, and to deposit those declarations with the Security Council;

6. *Also invites* those countries, pending the establishment of the zone, not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit the stationing on their territories, or territories under their control, of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices;

7. *Invites* the nuclear-weapon States and all other States to render their assistance in the establishment of the zone and at the same time to refrain from any action that runs counter to both the letter and the spirit of the present resolution;

8. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 75/33;

² A/76/190 (Part I).

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 729, No. 10485.

9. *Invites* all parties to consider the appropriate means that may contribute towards the goal of general and complete disarmament and the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution [46/30](#) and taking into account the evolving situation in the region, and to seek from those States their views on the measures outlined in chapters III and IV of the study annexed to the report of the Secretary-General of 10 October 1990⁴ or other relevant measures, in order to move towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East;

11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

12. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-seventh session the item entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East”.

⁴ [A/45/435](#).