

Research Report

Assembly: General Assembly 1

Topic: The question of the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East Region

Student Officer Name: Tong Serey Bunmanith

Position: Head Chair

Introduction

We are the first species to develop weapons leading to our own extinction. In the history of humankind, only two nuclear weapons have ever been deployed but they annihilated hundreds and thousands of lives. According to the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, nuclear weapons are considered to be the most destructive weapons ever created; one bomb can wipe out an entire city. Not only that, it leaves traces of radioactivity affecting generations. With its effect being extremely destructive, nations use nuclear weapons to threaten each other. By doing so, the World's citizens fear that history might repeat itself, causing an unsettling feeling. It is mandatory to take action upon this. Nations such as those in the Middle East are encouraged to take part in the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

Definition of Key Terms

Nuclear Weapon

Explosive device that uses the force of a nuclear reactions, either fission or fusion of molecules. According to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, a nuclear weapon is the most dangerous weapon on Earth.



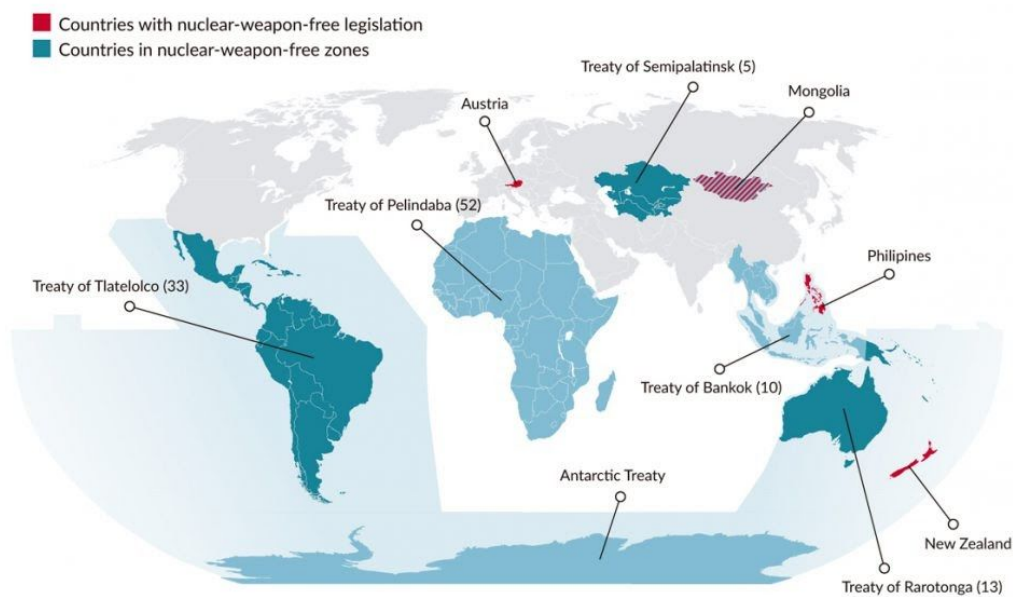
Middle East

The Middle East is the region which includes all of Turkey, Egypt and Western Asia.

(image credit: <http://www.wildcat.arizona.edu>)

Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ)

The General Assembly resolution 3472 adopted in 1945 defines a Nuclear Weapon Free zone as a region where there is a “total absence of nuclear weapons to which the zone shall be subject, including the procedure for the delimitation of the zone”. Not only that, countries considered in the NWFZ commit not to manufacture or test nuclear weapons. To this day, the 5 regions that are covered under the NWFZ include Latin America, South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central Asia.



(image credit: <https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org>)

Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ)

A zone free of weapons such as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Disarmament

Disarmament is the act of reducing and abolishing all sorts of weapons of mass destruction e.g nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Proliferation

According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, a Nuclear proliferation is the spread of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons technology and fissile materials to countries that don't already possess them.

Fatwa

Islamic law given by a recognized authority according to the Dictionary of Oxford.

Safeguards

This system is maintained by the International Atomic Energy Agency and aims to inspect non-nuclear states that they are in compliance and are respecting

obligations concerning the supply, manufacture and the use of nuclear weapons. This system provides credible assurance that States parties of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as those who are under the International Atomic Energy Agency, are implementing the conditions stated in the treaties.

Plutonium

A radioactive chemical element.

Background Information

The United Nations approved a resolution on the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone initialized by Iran and Egypt. The resolution passed annually from 1980 to 2018 and was even incorporated in the United Nations Security Council's Resolutions. However, in 2018, the United States and Israel voted against this resolution, making it the only time this resolution receiving such votes since its creation. As a matter of fact, the International Atomic Energy Agency has kept a close eye on the region since 1991 as it believes that this is a "necessary step for the establishment of the NWFZ". In 1995, the NPT Review Conference was held to adopt resolutions towards establishing a Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East. States are called out to make appropriate measures in order to establish such a zone. In addition, another Review Conference of the NPT was held in 2010. During this conference, state parties finally agreed on five practical steps to implement the resolution made during the 1995 NPT Review Conference. A two-day meeting held at the International Atomic Energy Agency on November 2011 where 97 participating nations concluded to four important points such as:

- continuing on working towards the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East;
- considering declarations of good intentions as a first step to break the current stalemate;
- making the best and most constructive use of every opportunity in the international agenda;
- identifying specific and practical confidence-building measures.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

This department has been established by the United Nations in 1998. It is part of the Secretary-General Kofi Annan's plan to reform the United Nations. This department aims to promote the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as biological and other chemical weapons.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Also known as the watchdog of the United Nations, this international organisation seeks to promote peaceful and safe ways to approach the production and the use of atomic energy. The IAEA was founded in 1957 and has now 171 member states.

This organization has something called the Additional Protocol: it is a legal document allowing the IAEA to have full access to information when doing their inspections.

Israel

It is believed that by 1967, Israel possessed an operational nuclear weapons capability and is the sixth country in the world to produce and possess such weapons. After the Six-Days war, Israel started their mass production of nuclear warheads. As a matter of fact, this country is the only country in the Middle East to possess and produce nuclear weapons.

Iran

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader issued a fatwa on August 9th of 2005 declaring that Iran shall never produce nor possess any nuclear weapons. Recently, Iran announced that it's withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal days after Trump ordered a strike on the Iranian general.

Egypt

Egypt does not take an interest in developing a nuclear weapons capability and is more focused on developing chemical and biological weapons.

Turkey

Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's president complained about nations monopolizing the possession of nuclear weapons. He spoke at the United Nations General Assembly on September 24th 2019, showing Turkey's interest in acquiring nuclear weapons. An official of the US Department gave Tayyip Erdogan a reminder that Turkey is party in the Non-Proliferation Treaty when it signed it back in 1968, emphasizing "great importance of Turkey's continued adherence to its obligations under the treaty."

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a non-nuclear state as it acceded the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1988. On top of that, this country signed the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2005 and brought it into force in 2009, meaning that it is under the IAEA's safeguard.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The United Arab Emirates signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995. In addition, UAE became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2003.

Syria

This country became a Non-Proliferation Treaty member in 1969. With the help of North Korea, Syria wishes to work towards the development of nuclear weapons but in 2007, the Israeli Air Force destroyed its plutonium production reactor. Representing the U.S government, the Bush administration was "convinced" that the development of nuclear reactor in Syria "had no peaceful intentions". Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian President denied the claim made by the United States and Israel by saying that the site was "just a military site being constructed". In 2009,

the IAEA intervened and asked Syria to cooperate with the investigation. With the results of the inspection, the IAEA declared the presence of uranium and graphite on the site which resembled an undeclared nuclear reactor. The IAEA was unable to deny or confirm the actual nature of the site as Syria failed to cooperate and provide credible information during the investigation. The General Director of the IAEA announced in 2011 that the site is very likely to be a nuclear reactor which Syria, under the NPT safeguards agreement, was required to declare but failed to do so.

Iraq

Iraq became a member of the IAEA in 1963 and ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1969. Under the dictatorship of President Saddam Hussein, Iraq had all kinds of Weapons of Mass Destructions (WMD), including nuclear weapons. For instance, it utilized chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1989). The international community pressured them to annihilate all sorts of WMD. After the Gulf War in 1991, many feared that Iraq might be reconstructing its WMD empire. This led to the United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003. To this day, Iraq has no active nuclear program.

Kuwait

Kuwait has not yet ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty, yet it signed the treaty in 1968. In 2016, Kuwait voted in favor of a UN General Assembly resolution which established the negotiations in 2017 on “a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.” In addition to this, this state voted in favor of another UN General Assembly resolution which called upon “all states that have not yet done so to sign, ratify, accept, approve, or accede to the treaty at the earliest possible date”.

Palestine

Palestine has signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This country is a nuclear weapon-free state and said in October 2019 that it was “proud to have participated in and actively contributed to the elaboration of the landmark and historic treaty”.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
1954	<i>Egypt launching its nuclear program with the help of the Soviet Union.</i>
1957	<i>Creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency.</i>
1960s	<i>Steps of the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East began.</i>
1967	<i>Israel possessing an operational nuclear weapons capability.</i>

- 1968 *Egypt signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They delayed the ratification in view of the fact that there was evidence showing that Israel was embarking on their own nuclear program.*
- 1969 *Syria becoming a member state of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.*
- 1974 *Joint declaration of Egypt and Iran on the establishment of such a zone; Egypt, especially, calls out other countries to join the NPT.*
- 1988 *Saudi Arabia signs the Non-Proliferation Treaty.*
- 1991 *The Madrid Peace conference in 1991 brings up the issue of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and the will to establish a NWFZ.*
- 1995 *United Arab Emirates signs the Non-Proliferation Treaty.*
- 2005 *Iran declaring that it shall never produce nor possess any nuclear weapons.
Saudi Arabia joins the International Atomic Energy Agency.*
- 2007 *Israeli Air Force destroys Syria's plutonium production reactor.*
- July 7th 2017 *The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is passed.*
- 2019 *Turkey's growing interest in acquiring nuclear weapons.*

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- UN resolutions relevant to the establishment of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East in chronological order:
 - Resolution 3269 (XXIX) - 9 December 1974
 - Resolution 3474 (XXX) - 11 December 1975
 - Resolution 31/71 - 10 December 1976
 - Resolution 32/82 - 12 December 1977
 - Resolution 33/64 - 14 December 1978
 - Resolution 34/77 - 11 December 1979
 - Resolution 35/147 - 12 December 1980
 - Resolution 36/87 - 9 December 1981
 - Resolution 37/75 - 9 December 1982
 - Resolution 38/64 - 15 December 1983
 - Resolution 39/54 - 12 December 1984
 - Resolution 40/82 - 12 December 1985
 - Resolution 41/48 - 3 December 1986
 - Resolution 42/28 - 30 November 1987

- Resolution 43/65 - 7 December 1988
- Resolution 44/108 - 15 December 1989
- Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
 - This treaty was created to prevent the spread of the production, possession as well as the use of nuclear weapons. This treaty was opened for signatures on July 1st 1968 and was entered into force in 1970. The NPT holds a big significance as there are a total of 191 States that have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States; United States of America, United Kingdom, Russia, France and China. Four UN member states have never agreed to sign the NPT India, Israel, Pakistan who possesses nuclear weapons and South Sudan.
- The NPT Review Conference in 1995
 - This conference was held to adopt resolutions concerning the Middle East. States in that region are called out to take appropriate measures in order to progress in the establishment of a Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFFZ) which obviously includes Nuclear Weapons.
- The Madrid Peace Conference
 - This conference, hosted by Spain and co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union, lasted from October 1st of 1991 to November 1st of the same year. This conference is a peace conference between Israel and Palestine wanted by the international community. During this conference, many expressed the wish to establish a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East.
- Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)
 - Also called the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty passed on July 7th 2017, is the first legal treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons which aims to eventually reach their total elimination. This Treaty was signed by 80 countries but is not put into force yet.

Previous Attempts to solve the issue

There have been many attempts to solve this issue as a whole as seen with the amount of UN resolutions written to establish a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the Middle East still is a zone that is not Nuclear-Free. The only obstacle to establishing a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East is Israel; it is the only country in the Middle East producing and possessing nuclear weapons. There have been many treaties and conferences discussing this topic, to endeavour to reach a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East mentioned above. This region has suffered many conflicts and wars and those events are currently still happening. It is mandatory to establish such a zone before history repeats itself.

Possible Solutions

There are many solutions to this problem such as:

- encouraging countries to place all their nuclear activities under the IAEA's safeguards,
- countries that have not signed the NPT must be urged to do so,
- if countries are already under the NPT, they must ratify it as quickly as they can,
- encouraging countries to declare their support in establishing a NWFZ and depositing these declarations with the Security Council; by declaring their support and giving good examples, they can influence neighboring countries supporting the possession, production and the use of nuclear weapons,
- the power of collective will should never be neglected and this is why countries supporting the elimination of all nuclear weapons must come together and create a strong bond to encourage countries to give up on supporting the very instrument capable of leading humankind to its extinction,
- treaties such as the TPNW must continue to happen,
- organizing more peace conferences where issues are solved peacefully instead of threatening each other with nuclear weapons.

Bibliography

- "Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) at first glance", Arms Control Association, July 2017
<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/nwzf>
- "Nuclear Weapon Free Zones", United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs
<https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/nwzf/>
- "General Assembly - Thirteenth Session", United Nations Official Document, 11 December 1975
[https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/3472\(XXX\)](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/3472(XXX))
- "WMD - Free Middle East Proposal at First Glance," Arms Control Association, December 2018
<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/mewmdfz>
- "Nuclear Weapons", United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs,
<https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/>
- "Nuclear Weapon Free Zones", World Future Council,
<https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/nuclear-weapon-free-zones-regional-security-middle-east-north-east-asia-europe/>
- "Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone", Federation of American Scientists, 2013,
https://fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/ArmsControl_NEW/nonproliferation/NFZ/NP-NFZ-ME.html
- "Kuwait", ICAN, <http://www.icanw.org/kuwait>

- “Palestine”, ICAN, <http://www.icanw.org/palestine>
- “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_on_the_Non-Proliferation_of_Nuclear_Weapons
- “Turkey shows nuclear weapons interest”, Arms Control Association, October 2019, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-10/news/turkey-shows-nuclear-weapons-interest>
- “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/>
- “Nuclear Weapons Program (Egypt)”, FAS, May 30th 2012, <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/egypt/nuke/>
- “Non-Proliferation Treaty Tarnished: Kuwait”, Arab Times, April 5th 2019, <https://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/non-proliferation-treaty-tarnished-kuwait/>
- “IRAQ”, NTI, <https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/iraq/>