First Committee
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Statement by
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Explanation of Vote

L.2- The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East

United Nations, New York
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Mr. Chairperson,

Resolution L.2 titled "The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East", which Israel voted against, has been submitted once again by the Arab Group. This is an unfortunate attempt to divert the First Committee’s attention away from the real proliferation challenges facing the Middle East. This approach serves neither the interests of regional states nor those of the international community.

Not only does this resolution distort the truth, it also fails to genuinely address the real WMD risks in the region. This should worry all of us, as this resolution undermines any attempt to address regional threats effectively, as well as curtails chances for a real and constructive dialogue between states of the region.

Mr. Chairperson,

The "Risk" resolution is detached from reality and from what the peoples of the Middle East have been experiencing; unrest and growing instability, unrelenting violence, large scale displacement of populations and territories ceded or abandoned to terrorists. Against this backdrop, the threat of proliferation of WMDs cannot be ignored or misrepresented as the text of this resolution purports to do.
Mr. Chairperson,

The authors of this resolution neglect to mention that four countries of the region namely: Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya - some of which are sponsors of this resolution - violated their NPT obligations and promoted a clandestine military nuclear program in contravention of their international obligations.

They also overlooked Iran’s continued aspirations for nuclear weapons and its continuous development of ballistic missiles. In this vein, it is important to recall that since the Implementation Day of the JCPOA, Iran tested more than 20 ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. These were of various ranges, among them a missile with a range of 2,500 km which also can reach well beyond the Middle East, a missile with an inscription stating Israel should be wiped off the face of the earth and a missile fired toward a Star of David drawn on the ground. The Secretary General’s reports under UNSCR 2231, called Iran to refrain from conducting these missile tests, warning that they have the potential to increase tensions in the region. He also clearly stipulated that Iran’s missile tests are not consistent with the spirit of the JCPOA.

In light of Iran’s subversive activity in the region, as well as its support for terrorist organizations in the region, which includes supplying weapons, financial support and military training, it is clear that the authors of this resolution have misdirected their efforts.
Mr. Chairperson,

In addition, this resolution deviates attention away from the atrocities conducted in Syria, in particular the use of Chemical Weapons. In the past year alone, we have witnessed the consequences of the horrendous Sarin attack perpetrated by the Syrian regime in Khan Shaykun which claimed the lives of at least 80 people and injured hundreds of others. The use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime has become a pattern, as we have seen in the past year. We are looking forward to the coming JIM report to shed more light on these criminal acts. The findings of the previous JIM reports indicate a persistent and worrying pattern of use of chemical weapons by the Assad Regime against the Syrian population, even after Syria's accession to the CWC and its obligation to forgo such capabilities and use of chemical weapons. This is especially significant in light of remaining discrepancies, inconsistencies and gaps in the Syrian declarations to the OPCW and the growing concerns about residual chemical weapons capabilities, including R&D, which would allow Syria to rehabilitate its chemical weapons program. This resolution would have us also forget about proliferation of chemical weapons to terrorist organizations and the cases of use of such weapons by these groups.

Mr. Chairperson,

We reject this resolution in its entirety. Attempts to side-track, detour or shortcut by submitting one-sided and biased resolutions in the multilateral sphere will not
succeed. If regional states wish to truly address the real risks and challenges in the region, they need to start by adopting a constructive and forthcoming approach which promotes direct dialogue, the building of confidence and trust.

Thank You.