

# **STATEMENT**

**By**

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Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by commending you, Ambassador Ham Sang Wook, on your election to preside over the 68<sup>th</sup> General Conference, and to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I also wish to express deep appreciation to Director General Grossi for his leadership.

Mr. President,

Almost one year ago, Israel faced the most brutal attack since its establishment, led by the inhumane terror organization Hamas and with the support of Iran. The massacre on October 7<sup>th</sup> has taken a terrible toll on thousands of Israeli citizens, including women, children and babies that were murdered, raped, and kidnapped by Hamas to the Gaza Strip, where they are treated brutally, and dozens of them have been murdered in cold blood.

Unfortunately, we are still far from understanding the long-term ramifications of the on-going war, against Hamas.

In addition, on April 14<sup>th</sup> Iran joined the terror organization Hamas by a direct attack on Israel from within its territory with 350 missiles. However, this attack failed with the assistance of Israel's close allies.

As the Director General of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, our national task is to guarantee the safety and security of our nuclear facilities that are openly targeted by Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, even more so since October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Israel continues to demonstrate its responsible behavior in this regard, and continues to take all necessary precautions to ensure that these facilities are operated according to the highest international safety and security standards to withstand these threats as required.

Mr. President,

Iran continues to be the main source of regional instability, and poses a threat to peace and security worldwide. This reality requires the full attention of the international community, now more than ever before.

There is no doubt that Iran conducted a military nuclear program aimed to produce several nuclear weapon devices. Iran continues to advance this program by gaining relevant technology and knowledge, along with fissile material in alarming amounts.

Iran has been conducting covert nuclear activities in undeclared sites for many years. The Agency has found concrete evidence of these activities, including the use of undeclared nuclear material and equipment.

Despite repeated resolutions by the Board of Governors, Iran has continuously failed to provide technically credible explanations regarding these activities, and continues to deceive the Agency and the international community.

Moreover, Iran continues to develop, test and deploy long-range ballistic missiles, and supports terrorist organizations throughout the Middle East, including the Houthi terrorist group that is a significant security threat to the freedom of navigation, and to the global trade routes.

A nuclear-armed Iran, equipped with delivery systems, is not an option that Israel, or the world, can, or should tolerate.

Mr. President,

Iran is not the single case of non-compliance in the region.

Syria, which built an undeclared, clandestine nuclear reactor at Dair Alzour, optimized for Plutonium production, has been in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations for over a decade.

Syria has recently followed the footsteps of its close ally, Iran, and is pretending to cooperate in good faith with the Agency, while not admitting the full facts, and not providing true answers to the Agency's questions.

The international community should stand behind the IAEA with a goal towards receiving clear, full, explanations from Syria, once and for all.

Mr. President,

The State of Israel attaches great importance to its cooperation with the Agency on a wide range of topics, including nuclear safety and security, technical cooperation, emergency preparedness, health and agriculture.

Israel dedicates the best experts to support and provide assistance for that purpose, and likewise, benefits from the Agency's expertise and knowledge.

Mr. President,

Along with its firm commitment to the IAEA and its important mission, the State of Israel strongly believes in the principle of equal rights of all IAEA Member States.

Israel deeply appreciates the efforts led by the "Group of Friends" to advance this issue since the adoption of the General Conference resolution last year.

Israel hopes that this initiative will finally rectify the long-standing discrimination against Israel and other "area-less states", and allow them to join their natural geographical group.

Mr. President,

Unfortunately, Israel has also been continuously singled out for many years by the Arab Group's agenda item on the so-called "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities".

This agenda item, placed on the agenda year after year, is politically driven, and is completely outside the scope of the IAEA Statute and mandate.

We strongly object to its inclusion on the agenda, as well as to the linkage made to other political issues that are completely unrelated to the professional discussions of the General Conference.

We regret that this agenda item has once again been imposed on this professional forum, which unfortunately draws attention from the important issues concerning the General Conference.

Mr. President,

Israel looks forward to a successful Conference with meaningful outcomes and to a productive relationship with the Agency, this year, and in the years to come.

I thank you Mr. President, for the opportunity to address this distinguished forum.