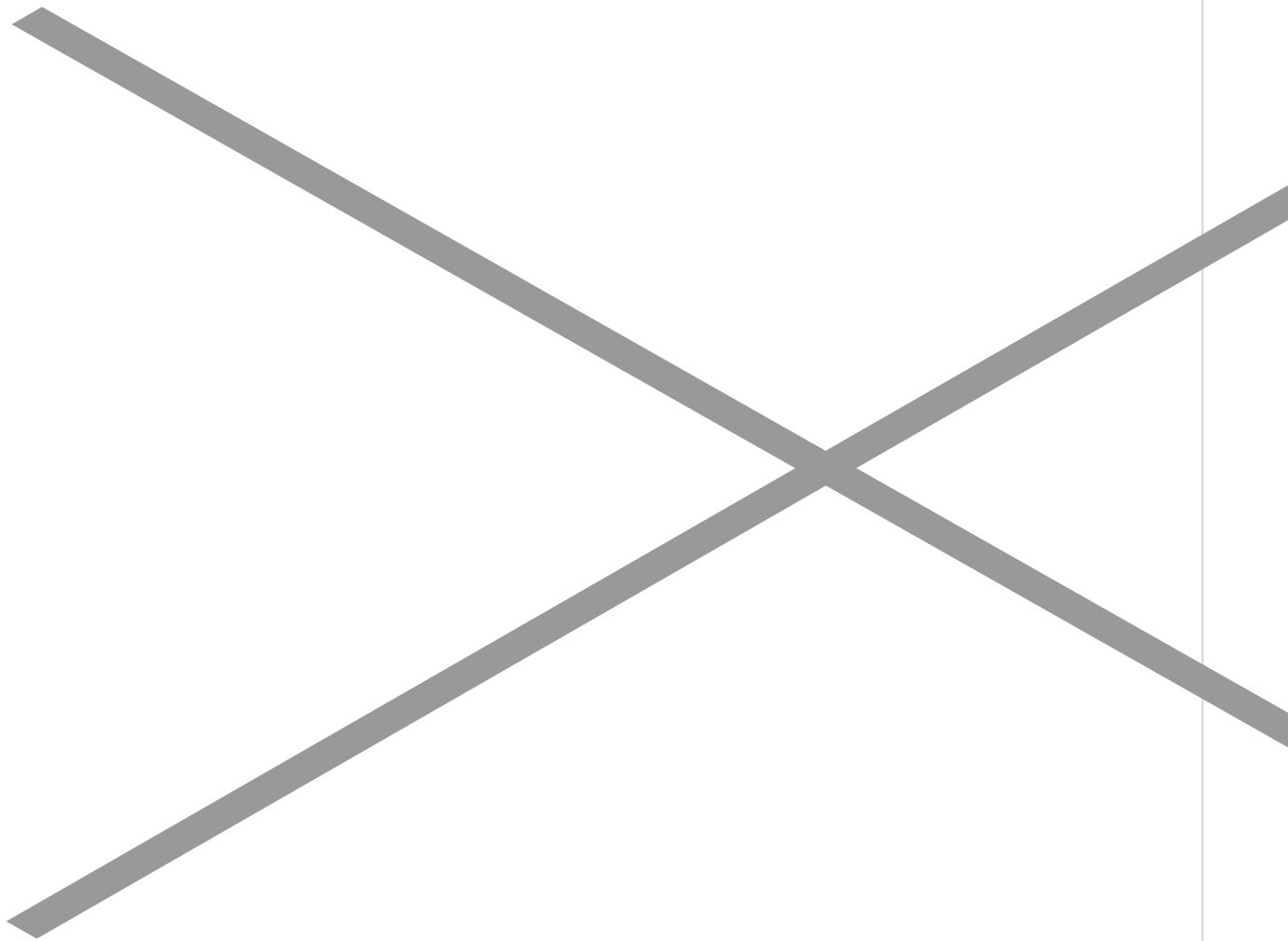


Iranian foreign minister says international community must pressure Israel to destroy nuclear arsenal

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Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif speaks a virtual meeting of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. (Photo: UN)

Tehran, October 3 (RHC)-- Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on the international community to compel the "outlaw" Israeli regime, the "sole possessor" of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, to swiftly accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and annihilate its nuclear arsenal.

Addressing the head of the United Nations General Assembly on Friday, Zarif made the remarks in a video message broadcast at the 75th high-level plenary meeting, attended by nearly 100 foreign ministers, to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

The United States, as "the world's lone perpetrator of a nuclear attack extends blind support to the sole possessor of a nuclear arsenal in our region: an outlaw regime that has openly threatened others with nuclear annihilation, all while crying wolf about proliferation," Iran's top diplomat said at the virtual meeting, referring to Israel, which is in possession of an estimated 200 nuclear warheads.

Zarif added that the Tel Aviv regime, "which has aggression in its very DNA", has deceived the world about its secret development of nuclear armament for the past six decades and that it is high time the global community pressures the occupying entity to "submit to the most intrusive inspection regime that law-abiding members of the NPT observe."

"We also call on the General Assembly to declare as a binding norm of international law that a nuclear war cannot be won--and must never be fought. This should be followed by a long-overdue, concrete program for time-bound nuclear disarmament and provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states in the interim," he said.

Iran's foreign minister further said that figures revealed that during the last year, \$72.9 billion had been spent on developing nuclear armaments across the world - "half of it by the US alone"- meaning that the colossal sum of money is more than the Gross domestic product (GDP) of most countries.

"Just imagine if the billions wasted on instruments of global annihilation were allocated to help fund the fight against COVID-19," Zarif concluded, stressing, "Enough is enough."

Israel is not a signatory to the NPT and has refused to either confirm or deny the existence of nuclear weapons in its arsenal.

The regime has been invariably blaming Tehran's peaceful nuclear energy program for "diversion" toward military purposes to supposedly rationalize the ceaseless fortification of its military with Washington's help.

This is while Tehran is an NPT signatory that roundly rejects either development or possession of nuclear arms on religious and humanitarian grounds.

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