

# *Syria calls for forcing Israel to join Non-Proliferation Treaty*

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**This satellite photo, released earlier this year, shows construction near the Shimon Peres Negev nuclear center, not far from the city of Dimona, in Israeli-occupied Palestine. (Via AP)**

United Nations, September 19 (RHC)-- A Syrian envoy to the UN has urged the international community to compel Israel to join Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) while also slamming Washington's double standards and support for the occupying regime.

Addressing the IAEA Board on safeguards in the Middle East, Syria's permanent representative to the UN and other international organizations in Vienna, Hasan Khaddour, noted that the Tel Aviv regime should allow inspection of all its nuclear facilities by the IAEA "without preconditions." "The International Community must take serious steps in order to oblige Israel to join Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," SANA quoted him as saying.

The envoy also slammed the double-standard policies of the United States with regard to the proliferation of mass destruction weapons and its unconditional support for Israel. "The U.S claims interest in issues of non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons, but when it is related to Israel and its nuclear and chemical arsenal, all this vanishes as it seeks to find justifications and excuses," he added.

The Israeli regime is estimated to possess 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, which makes it the sole possessor of unconventional weapons in the Middle East region. Israel pursues a policy of deliberate ambiguity about its nuclear weapons program as it neither confirms nor dismisses the reports.

Meanwhile, the Tel Aviv regime has refused to either allow inspections of its military nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or sign the NPT. Observers believe that the regime has been emboldened to accelerate its nuclear activities by the support it receives from the US and Europe, which are both most critical of Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program.

Iran has also repeatedly voiced concern over Israel's unsupervised nuclear activities. Iran's previous ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, urged for Israel's accession to the NPT "without precondition and further delay" while addressing the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on August 22.

The placement of all Israeli nuclear activities and facilities under the comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards are "essential in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East," added the diplomat.

The remarks of the Syrian diplomat come as his country has been a frequent target of airstrikes by the Israeli regime. The latest attack was carried out early on Saturday, as the regime conducted airstrikes on Damascus International Airport and other positions south of the capital city.

Citing a military source, SANA reported that the attack claimed the lives of five soldiers and caused some material damage. Tel Aviv regime rarely comments on its attacks on Syrian territories, which many see as a knee-jerk reaction to the Syrian government's success in confronting and decimating terrorism.

Israel has been one of the main supporters of terrorist groups that oppose the democratically-elected government of President Bashar al-Assad since the foreign-backed militancy erupted in Syria.

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