

Statement by the Arab Forum for Security and Nuclear Non-proliferation

regarding

The suspension of the Helsinki conference for discussion a zone free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East

The Arab forum for Security and Nuclear Non-proliferation (The Arab Forum) followed recent developments including the unilateral statement issued by the US State Department referring to the non-convening of the Helsinki meeting which was intended to discuss the establishment of a Middle East WMD-free zone.

The Arab Forum also followed statements issued by the facilitator office as well as the British and Russian governments which reflected different reactions.

Despite optimism following the release of the NPT Review Conference (Revcon) final statement in 2010, the prevailing climate within the Middle East is tainted with frustration and pessimism.

The coordination committee of the Arab Forum for Security and nonproliferation convened to discuss the postponement/suspension of the Helsinki meeting, taking into consideration the following:

- The Helsinki Conference, have failed to convene in 2012, and to achieve its goals
- The non-convening of the Helsinki Conference will negatively and directly affect the upcoming nuclear non-proliferation treaty preparatory conference, expected to take place in Geneva (April 2013)
- These developments will also have damaging repercussions for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Revcon expected to take place in 2015; it will represent a serious setback towards efforts aiming to achieve peace and international stability.
- Whereas Arab States have agreed to indefinitely extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995 and the subsequent launch of "resolution on the Middle East"
- Whereas Arab countries endorsed the launch of goodwill initiatives in the International Agency for Atomic Energy during 2011 and 2012 which abandoned a resolution condemning Israeli nuclear capabilities
- Whereas Arab confidence building measures have failed to achieve its objectives
- Whereas no new date has been set and the fate of the Helsinki meeting remains unknown
- Whereas the Arab Forum for Security and Nonproliferation is in direct coordination and consultations with Arab decision-makers

The Arab Forum discussed available options for the Arab States, including the study of possible alternatives and expected consequences of not convening the Helsinki Conference on time, these included the following:

- Given the political instability experienced by a number of Arab countries and given the state of growing aspirations within the Arab population, it is important to take measures to restore confidence and promote harmony between the Arab public and its governments.
- Given that the Arab side is required to take a leading role, which may include the cessation of engaging in forums of predetermined outcomes, the Arab Forum calls upon Arab decision makers to reconsider the indefinite extension of the NPT in light of the non-implementation of the Middle East resolution, which was the basic pillar for the indefinite extension of the treaty. The Arab Forum also calls for re-negotiating a modern and fair mechanism to periodically extend the treaty according to the interest of Arab parties and in light of regional conditions.
- The Arab Forum for Security and Nonproliferation stresses that the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction is the only way to achieving stability in the Middle East and the proper avenue to ending the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- The Arab Forum for Security and nonproliferation believes of the importance of establishing a zone free from all types of weapons of mass destruction, for that purpose the forum will pursue all possible cooperation avenues with international parties and research institute to achieve this goal.
- In recognition of the important role of the Finnish facilitator, the Arab Forum is committed to providing support and assistance towards the facilitator efforts until achieving his ascribed goal.
- In parallel with the NPT Prepcom meeting due to be held in Geneva, the Arab Forum will hold meetings with various parties and will introduce its mandate and objectives to the international community.
- The Arab Forum aims to holding a simulation for the Helsinki Conference (i.e. a Mock Conference) with the participation of the academic and non-governmental sectors, representing both the Arab and International community.

The Coordinating Committee of the Arab Forum has decided to accept an invitation from the League of Arab States to attend the meetings of senior officials committee. The Arab Forum will convey to the official side ideas and proposals presented by its members to discuss the possibility of their adoption and endorsement.

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