

Haifa Conference Declaration

Declaration by the Haifa Conference for a Nuclear Weapons and Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East held in Haifa - Israel 5-6 December 2013

Frightened by the immediate threat of another catastrophic war in the Middle East, with its resources that underlie the economies of major global powers, and the derailed Helsinki conference that would have created a process for precluding such a war, an historic Conference was initiated by Israeli citizens under the slogan, "If Israel won't come to Helsinki, Helsinki will come to Israel." A coalition of current and former Israeli parliamentarians and local and international peace and human rights activists met in Haifa, Israel, on December 5, - 6, 2013, to call for a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East and for a world free of nuclear weapons.

In a letter of greeting sent to the Conference, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter wrote: "A middle East free of weapons of mass destruction is a reasonable and attainable goal." And he added: "I commend the conference organizers on this important initiative and call on all states in the region to take immediate steps to rid this volatile part of the world of these dangerous weapons."

The Haifa Conference affirmed support for prompt convening of the Helsinki Conference on creating such a WMD-free zone:

- Unanimously mandated by the NPT Review Conference at the
- United Nations (UN) in New York in 2010;

Demanded by most of the High Level representatives of governments meeting on nuclear disarmament at the UN in New York in September 2013;

- Reaffirmed by the General Assembly of the UN in December 2013; and
- Endorsed by the Non Aligned Movement.

We recognize the importance of the two agreements that for now avoid war: Syria to abolish its chemical weapons; and Iran with the international group of nations, to diplomatically address their differences over Iran's nuclear program. We welcome the upcoming negotiations in Geneva to end the war in Syria and the ongoing negotiations with Iran.

The Haifa Conference welcomes the formation of the Israeli Coalition for Nuclear Weapons and WMD Disarmament in the Middle East that was built in the process of preparing this conference. The Israeli coalition will take upon itself the responsibility to broaden its circles of activity and bring more participants into this new public discourse, while forging relationships with similar-minded organizations in the region and the world. The members of the coalition believe that the time of nuclear ambiguity has long since passed, and that the global and regional circumstances demand a new policy. This policy would recognize the end of the Israeli nuclear monopoly. With two options posed before us - either nuclear weapons for all , or complete WMD disarmament in the region , including Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia and others- our choice is very clear: we stand for a Middle East Free of Nuclear Weapons and all Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The coalition rejects all racist phrase-mongering and threats of regional wars, rejects all encouragements about the usage of violence or WMDs.

Fifty years having passed since the Dimona Reactor was built, the Israeli coalition believes that now is the time for new anti-nuclear thinking that will save citizens in Israel and the peoples of the region from the horror of nuclear weapons - not only in the case that Israel is attacked with these weapons, but also in the case that it becomes the attacker. We endorse the demands of the coalition on the state of Israel:

- Determined and persistent activity to achieve a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all WMD;
- Constructive, good faith participation in the Helsinki Conference;
- Attendance at the February 2014 Mexico Conference on the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons;
- Accession to and ratification of all treaties and instruments related to nuclear and all weapons of mass destruction;
- Cessation and prohibition of acquisition, production, stockpiling, threat or use of nuclear weapons;
- Subjecting all nuclear facilities to International Energy Agency safeguards, monitoring and verification;
- Full public disclosure of radioactive and toxic contamination by the Dimona facilities of the air, soil and ground water, endangering the health and environment of Israelis, Palestinians and the peoples of all neighboring countries and the Mediterranean Sea;
- Closure, decommissioning, containment, remediation and full public disclosure of all other weapons-of-mass-destruction facilities;
- The nuclear disarmament and complete halt of all plans to develop nuclear weapons throughout the region , must be a very essential part of achieving peace. And should help ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories as part of a just , peaceful and lasting solution.; and
- The equal participation of women at all levels of discussion, advocacy and diplomacy in implementation of these demands.

We call upon the international community to support the above demands of the Israeli coalition and to further the campaign for a Nuclear Weapons and WMD Free Zone in the Middle East by:

- Publicizing the existence of the Israeli coalition;
- Circulating this Declaration;
- Circulating the petition calling for the UN to promptly hold the Helsinki conference; and
- Promoting implementation of the above demands.

With profound sorrow this Conference learned of the death of Nelson Mandela. We consider our efforts to be a continuation of the goals to which he dedicated his life - liberation, reconciliation and nuclear abolition.

All of these efforts in this critical time will help lead to the global elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, thus reducing the tensions and disputes that lead to war. We accept the obligation to implement this Declaration.

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