

Forum: General Assembly First Committee

Issue: The Question Of Preventing Nuclear Proliferation In Emerging Regional Powers

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Introduction

The question of preventing nuclear proliferation in emerging regional powers is an extremely important issue in the world we are living in. At a time when international relations are under significant strain and global conflicts are increasing, nuclear proliferation demands serious attention and the development of viable solutions.

Nuclear proliferation, especially in emerging regional powers, has a tendency to create an alarming chain effect on global security. If states that do not possess nuclear arms feel threatened by their surrounding countries and feel the need to develop nuclear weapons, neighboring states may develop a sense of fear and feel compelled to make themselves appear stronger. As a result, a nuclear arms race emerges, weakening overall global security. This issue particularly concerns emerging powers rather than already established nuclear powers such as the United States or the Russian Federation.

The United Nations takes this risk seriously and claims that nuclear proliferation is a significant security threat. The United Nations Secretary-General has stated that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is essential to peace.¹ In addition, the United Nations claims that the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) is the central international agreement aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, working towards peace agreements, and promoting peaceful nuclear cooperation.² There have been many resolutions adopted by the United Nations stating that nuclear proliferation poses a global security risk, such as the Resolution 1172 (1998), which was done by the Security Council.³

¹ [UN](#) - Accessed 17.12.25

² [UN NPT claim](#) - Accessed 17.12.25

³ [UN security council resolution 1172](#) - Accessed 17.12.25

Definition of Key Terms

NPT

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, more commonly known as NPT, is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and related technology, and to promote cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.⁴

Nuclear proliferation

Nuclear Proliferation stands for the spread of nuclear weapons, technology, or materials to countries that do not possess them. It also applies to potential acquisition of such weapons by armed groups.⁵

Emerging regional power

An emerging power is a sovereign state or union of states with significantly rising influence in global affairs. Emerging powers aspire to gain a more powerful position or role in international relations, either globally or regionally.⁶

Global security

The cooperating protection of the world against wars or other threats.⁷

NGo

A non-governmental organization is an entity that is not part of the government. This can include nonprofit and for-profit organizations.⁸

Background

The question of preventing nuclear proliferation in emerging regional powers is a very relevant topic in today's world. Nuclear proliferation refers to the spread of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons technology, or materials to countries that do not already possess them.⁹ Emerging regional powers are

⁴ [The NPT](#) - Accessed 17.12.25

⁵ [Britannica - Nuclear proliferation](#) - Accessed 17.12.25

⁶ [Emerging power](#) - Accessed 17.12.25

⁷ [Global security](#) - Accessed 18.12.25

⁸ [NGO](#) - Accessed 18.12.25

⁹ [Nuclear proliferation](#) - Accessed 18.12.25

sovereign states increasingly shaping international affairs.¹⁰ Good examples of emerging regional powers at the moment are for example Brazil or Turkey.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons causes a severe security dilemma, as it may trigger an arms race and weaken national security rather than enhance it. Nuclear proliferation can easily escalate and build up tensions. In a world where diplomatic and political relations are unsteady and conflicts occur all throughout the world, nuclear proliferation only increases instability. It generates instability and assertive behaviour among emerging powers that perceive a need to project strength and authority, possibly due to perceived threats from neighbouring countries. This results in a devastating chain reaction where all the neighbouring states feel the need to develop nuclear weapons for the same reasons.

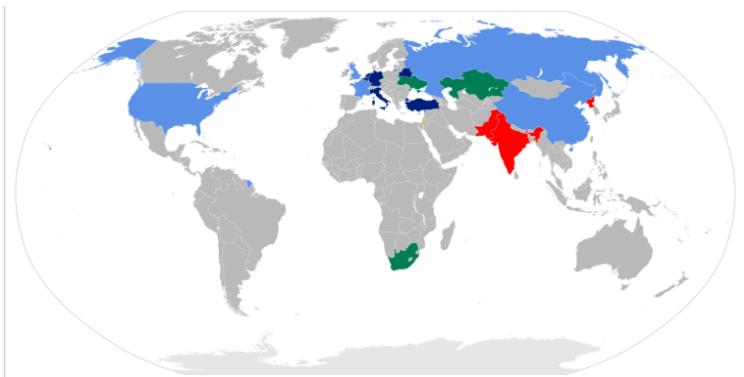
The United Nations and numerous NGOs are working towards preventing nuclear proliferation and play a crucial role in preventing nuclear proliferation, particularly through monitoring nuclear technologies. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conducts inspections to ensure that states keep up to their commitments under the Non-proliferation Treaty and other related agreements, ensuring nuclear materials are used only for peaceful purposes.¹¹ The United Nations does its part by enacting resolutions, imposing sanctions and applying diplomatic pressure. There has been work done in the United Nations towards eliminating such weapons ever since its establishment and the very first resolution on the matter was adopted by the UN general assembly in 1946.¹²

Nuclear proliferation involves several serious risks. For example, there is an increased risk of miscalculation or accidental nuclear conflict if neighbouring states engage in a nuclear arms race. There is also an increased risk that nuclear materials and technologies would end up in the hands of different organized terrorist groups, particularly in the Middle East, which could potentially launch an international emergency. As the map shows, powerful states such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq do not possess nuclear weapons. Taking into consideration the aggressive history between Iran and Iraq, a arms race between the two would pose a severe threat to regional and international security.

¹⁰ [Emerging power](#) - Accessed 18.12.25

¹¹ [IAEA](#) - Accessed 18.12.25

¹² [UN nuclear policy](#) - Accessed 18.12.25



Map of states with nuclear weapons by status in the [Non-Proliferation Treaty](#) (NPT) in 2025:

- Party to NPT and declared possession of nuclear weapons ([China](#), [France](#), [Russia](#), [United Kingdom](#), [United States](#))
- Non-party to NPT and declared possession of nuclear weapons ([India](#), [North Korea](#), [Pakistan](#))
- Non-party to NPT and non-declared possession of nuclear weapons ([Israel](#))
- No state-developed nuclear weapons, but hosting nuclear weapons of Russia ([Belarus](#)) or of the United States ([Belgium](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Netherlands](#), [Turkey](#))
- Former possession of nuclear weapons ([Kazakhstan](#), [South Africa](#), [Ukraine](#))

(Map of states with nuclear weapons by status in the Non-Proliferation treaty in 2025)¹³

Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

United States of America

The United States of America claims that it is committed to upholding and strengthening the NPT while reducing the possibility of costly and dangerous arms races by working closely with its partners around the world, all while having a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons.¹⁴

The US voted in favor of UN security council resolution 1929 in June 2010, which imposed new sanctions on Iran due to its nuclear program and banned Iran from investing in nuclear activities abroad.

¹⁵The US also voted for General Assembly resolution 2373, which endorsed the work of the NPT.¹⁶ The United States promotes the work of the NPT because it limits nuclear proliferation while allowing the US to retain its nuclear arsenal within a legal framework.

The United States has a record of voting against certain resolutions on this issue. For example, the United States voted against Resolution A/RES/71/258 (2016), which aimed to advance multilateral

¹³ [Nuclear weapon map](#) - Accessed 18.12.25

¹⁴ [US gov state](#) - Accessed 18.12.25

¹⁵ [Reso1929](#) - Accessed 19.12.25

¹⁶ [Reso 2373](#) -Accessed 19.12.25

nuclear disarmament negotiations¹⁷. The US argued that the resolution failed to address concerns of nuclear-armed states. nuclear armed states' security concerns.

The Russian Federation

The Russian Federation holds a large amount of power on this matter, as it owns numerous nuclear weapons. Despite maintaining a large nuclear arsenal, Russia claims to support nuclear non-proliferation and existing treaties like the NPT.

The Russian Federation voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolution 1929, which aimed to sanction Iran over its nuclear program. Russia has similar voting records as the US, as both nations share the possession of an extremely powerful Nuke arsenal. For example Russia voted also against the UN general assembly resolution 71/258.

The Russian federation possesses more than five thousand nuclear weapons, and has not yet signed or ratified the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. In 2019, the minister of foreign affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov stated that the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons cannot be achieved by the arrogant methods on which the document is based. Russia later reaffirmed this in 2024, stating that there is no reason for them to support the TPNW and other “radical initiatives in this area”. ¹⁸

Iran

At the moment, Iran does not possess any nuclear weapons, but it has nuclear materials that makes it possible to build nukes. Iran voted for the UNGA resolution 71/258, which focused on advancing multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. Iran has a record of supporting resolutions supporting resolutions related to nuclear disarmament, especially those emphasising the disarmament obligations of nuclear-armed states.

Iran abstained from voting on a UN General Assembly resolution on nuclear arms control and non-proliferation, which called on states to comply with existing non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and to strengthen global compliance mechanisms. Taking into consideration that the resolution had 163 votes in favor, zero against and ten abstentions, abstaining from voting sends out a

¹⁷ [A/RES/71/258](#)-Accessed 19.12.25

¹⁸ [Russia's stand on TPNW](#) - Accessed 19.12.25

clear message that Iran does not support the resolution.¹⁹ Iran also voted against the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation (draft A/C.1/79/L.16), making it the only state to do so.²⁰

Israel

With the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict, Israel's nuclear weapons have been a topic of concern around the world. Israel possesses around 90 nuclear weapons, and has not joined the TPNW.²¹ As of today, Israel is the only country in the Middle East known to possess nuclear weapons and is also suspected to possess chemical and biological weapons. Israel is the only nuclear-armed country to maintain a policy of deliberate ambiguity meaning that the state chooses not to formally deny or admit the extent of its nuclear, chemical and biological warfare capabilities.²²

Israel was the only state to vote against UN General Assembly resolution (A/C.1/79/L.1), which called on all states in the Middle East to take steps towards creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone.²³ Israel also voted against UN General Assembly resolution (A/C.1/79/L2), which focused on proliferation risks in the Middle East and called for full implementation of existing commitments; Israel was one of the five states to vote against this resolution.

Overall, Israel maintains a neutral stance on the issue, since they maintain a policy of nuclear opacity. If neighbouring countries were to develop nuclear weapons, Israel would most likely feel extremely threatened, and a nuclear arms race in the middle east would pose a serious threat to global security.

NPT

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also known as the NPT is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to promote peaceful nuclear cooperation between states. The treaty was signed on 1 July 1968 and became effective on 5 March 1970.

¹⁹ [UNGA](#) - Accessed 19.12.25

²⁰ [UN draft A/C.1/79/L.16](#)-Accessed 19.12.25

²¹ [Israel nuclear weapons](#) -Accessed 19.12.25

²² [Israel-mass destruction](#) - accessed 19.12.25

²³ [Israel's vote against UNGA \(A/C.1/79/L.1\)](#) -Accessed 19.12.25

By August 2016, 191 states had become parties of the treaty. The only party to announce its withdrawal was North Korea in 2003, which later carried out its first nuclear test in 2006.²⁴ Four UN states have not joined the NPT, in addition to North Korea: India, Israel, Pakistan and South Sudan.

The NPT is deeply integrated into the work of the United Nations, as it is a vital treaty for achieving broader objectives of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1938-1962	The nuclear age began. In the late 1930s new scientific discoveries made nuclear weapons a possibility. During World War II, the US and its allies were afraid that their enemies would control nuclear weapons technology first and as a result they began to produce bombs in 1942.
Aug 6, 1945-Aug 9, 1945	First atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first weapon killed more than one hundred thousand people on August 6. August 9, the US dropped a second atomic bomb which killed more than seventy thousand people. As of today they remain the only atomic bombs ever used in war.
Jul 29, 1957	IAEA was created. The international atomic energy agency was created with the mission of promoting and overseeing the peaceful use of nuclear technology, such as in power plants.
Sep 29, 1957	The Kyshtym Nuclear Disaster occurred in secret. A hastily built tank of nuclear waste exploded in the town of Ozyorsk, the original site of the Soviet nuclear weapons program. The disaster ended up releasing more radioactive contamination than Chernobyl.
Oct 15, 1962 - Oct 28, 1962	The Cuban missile crisis threatened nuclear war. A US military plane discovered Soviet nuclear missiles under construction in Cuba. The site was only about 100 miles from the Florida coast.
1968-1975	Nuclear non-proliferation went global. The United Nations established the first framework relating to nuclear weapons with the NPT and the world's two biggest nuclear powers. The United States and the Soviet Union took their first steps towards limiting their nuclear arsenals.

²⁴ [NPT](#)-Accessed 19.12.25

Feb 14, 1967	The first nuclear-weapon-free zone was established. The treaty of Tlatelolco opened, establishing Latin America as the first nuclear-weapon-free zone.
Jun 12, 1968	First international treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons was signed. The UNGA adopted a resolution endorsing the draft text of the treaty on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT)
May 26, 1972	SALT I treaty was signed. President Nixon and the Soviet Union leader Brezhnev signed the interim strategic arms limitations treaty, which was the first time in the Cold War that the US and the Soviet Union agreed to put limitations on their nuclear arsenals.
May 18, 1974	India conducted its first nuclear test. Although the country's government initially denied it, India now sees its nuclear program central to its security.
1986-2000	The end of the Cold War improved non-proliferation efforts. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, real progress was made to strengthen the NPT.
May 23, 1992	Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine gave up nuclear weapons. An international agreement between the three former territories of the Soviet Union and Russia required all nuclear weapons within the territories to be destroyed or transferred over to Russia for destruction.
Sep 24, 1996	The comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty opened up for signatures. The treaty banned nuclear explosions of any kind, including weapons tests. The CTBT is not yet legally binding, because not all the required countries, including China, India, Pakistan and the US, have ratified or approved it.
May 1997	The IAEA's model additional protocol was introduced. Part of the IAEA's mandate is to ensure that countries are using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, like energy. However, after the 1991 Gulf War, it was discovered that Iraq had pursued an undeclared nuclear weapons program despite being subject to IAEA inspections.
Jan 10, 2003	North Korea withdrew from the NPT. They stated "We can no longer remain bound to the NPT, allowing the country's security and the dignity of our nation be infringed upon". Almost four years later, the North Korean government announced that it had completed a nuclear test, becoming the eighth country in history to successfully do so.
Apr 14, 2009	North Korea walked out of six party talks. Negotiations between China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea and the United States to find a peaceful resolution to North Korea's nuclear weapons program fell

	apart after the UN security council condemned a North Korean test launch of a rocket.
Jul 15, 2015	World powers reached a nuclear agreement with Iran. The US, China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the European Union reached a nuclear agreement with Iran after years of negotiation.
Jul 7, 2017	The UN adopted a nuclear weapons ban treaty. Since then, nearly 100 countries have signed the treaty, which prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of nuclear weapon use.
Feb 24, 2022	Russia invaded Ukraine. Risks of nuclear conflicts increased after Russia, a nuclear power, has signaled its willingness to use "allmeans" to protect its territory. In response, NATO countries agreed to strengthen their nuclear deterrence and increase readiness for any nuclear threat.
June, 2025	Israel and the US struck Iran's nuclear facilities. Israel launched a preemptive strike on Iranian nuclear facilities. Despite its earlier diplomatic efforts, the US then launched strikes of its own. The extent of the damage to Iran's nuclear program remains unclear. ²⁵

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions and Treaties

The United Nations has taken the matter extremely seriously and recognizes all the risks relating to Nuclear proliferation. Listed below are three of the most relevant resolutions regarding the prevention of nuclear proliferation.

- The UN security council resolution S/RES/1540

This resolution has been a landmark regarding this issue. It decides that all states shall refrain from providing any form of support to non-state actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture,

²⁵ [TIMELINE](#)- Accessed 19.12.25

possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery. The resolution treats proliferation as a global security risk and calls upon all member states to take actions in order to prevent the spread of deadly weapons of mass destruction. The resolution states: "Gravely concerned by the threat of terrorism and the risk that non-State actors, such as those identified in the United Nations list established and maintained by the Committee established under Security Council resolution 1267 and those to whom resolution 1373 applies, may acquire, develop, traffic in or use nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery," The resolution was a major step in recognizing the severity of the problem. The resolution was adopted in 28 April 2004²⁶

- UN security council resolution S/RES/1887

This resolution was adopted on 24 September 2009. It reaffirms the NPT as the foundation of the global non-proliferation regime and calls all member states to adhere to their obligations under the NPT, including cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as the establishment of measures to reduce nuclear arms. ²⁷

- UN security council resolution S/RES/1172

This resolution was adopted on 6 June 1998. It demands that India and Pakistan refrain from further nuclear tests, urges both states to resume dialogue on all outstanding issues in order to reduce tensions, and encourages them to find mutually acceptable solutions that address the root causes of those tensions. ²⁸

Possible Solutions

Strengthening international agreements

The United Nations needs to take a stronger global stance. It should call upon all member states to support and furthermore enforce the work of the NPT by encouraging member states to remain compliant and transparent.

Nuclear-weapon-free zone

²⁶ [S/RES/1540](#)-Accessed 19.12.25

²⁷ [S/RES/1887](#) -Accessed 19.12.25

²⁸ [S/RES/1772](#)-Accessed 19.12.25

The United Nations needs to develop new nuclear-weaponfree zones, making it legally prohibited to use or test nuclear weapons in specific areas. This would create clear and transparent guidelines for all member states to follow, while also fostering a stronger sense of global security and unity.

Security Guarantees

The United Nations needs to provide more comprehensive security guarantees and assurances from major powers, states would feel less pressure to develop a nuclear arsenal for protection. If countries would not feel threatened by their neighbouring countries, the possibility for a nuclear arms race to start for example in the middle east would decrease significantly.

Economic and Political “deals” in the Middle-East

The United Nations can offer specific states in the Middle-East economic aid, trade access, and development support in exchange for non-proliferation commitments and agreements, relying on the responsibility of the member states to uphold these agreements.

Security of the materials

The materials need to be precisely observed, and their export should be tracked to ensure that no materials used in building mass destruction weapons can be accessible for non-state actors such as terrorist groups.

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