

Board of Governors

GOV/2009/36

Date: 5 June 2009

Restricted Distribution

Original: English

For official use only

Item 6(f) of the provisional agenda
(GOV/2009/33)

Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic

Report by the Director General

1. On 19 February 2009, the Director General reported to the Board of Governors on the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) (GOV/2009/9). The Board requested the Director General to keep it informed of developments, as appropriate. This report covers relevant developments since that date.

A. Chronology of Events

2. On 2 June 2008, the Director General informed the Board of Governors that the Agency had been provided with information alleging that an installation at the Dair Alzour site in Syria destroyed by Israel in September 2007 had been a nuclear reactor.

3. As indicated in the Director General's previous report, analysis of the environmental samples taken from the Dair Alzour site during the visit of Agency inspectors revealed a significant number of anthropogenic natural uranium particles (i.e. produced as a result of chemical processing) which indicated that the uranium was of a type not included in Syria's declared inventory of nuclear material. Syria has stated that the origin of the uranium particles was the missiles used to destroy the building (GOV/2008/60, para. 8; GOV/2009/9, para. 2).

4. As part of its efforts to confirm Syria's assertions about the possible source of uranium particles found at Dair Alzour, the Agency, in a letter dated 13 March 2009, provided Syria with the results of additional analyses of the environmental samples. The Agency also reiterated its request that Syria provide further access to the Dair Alzour site (including the water treatment plant at the site), and any other locations where the debris from the building and equipment, and any salvaged equipment removed from Dair Alzour, had been and/or was currently located, so that the Agency could take samples of, and environmental samples from, these items and materials. The Agency also reiterated its

earlier request that Syria share the results of any assessments that it may have performed regarding the materials used during, or resulting from, the bombing.

5. In a letter dated 21 April 2009, the Agency provided comments to Syria on the statements made by Syria in its letter of 15 February 2009 regarding alleged efforts by Syrian entities to procure materials and equipment which could support the construction of a nuclear reactor. While expressing appreciation for Syria's efforts to answer some of the issues raised in earlier correspondence, the Agency informed Syria that its responses were only partial and did not address most of the questions. The Agency requested further clarification and supporting documentation in relation to the functions of the destroyed and currently existing installations at the Dair Alzour site, as well as the other locations alleged to be related to Dair Alzour, and in relation to procurement activities. The Agency reiterated its 13 March 2009 request for information related to Syria's assertion about the origin of the uranium particles found at Dair Alzour.

6. In a letter dated 18 May 2009, the Agency informed Syria that anthropogenic natural uranium particles had been found in environmental samples taken in 2008 from the hot cells of the Miniature Neutron Source Reactor (MNSR) facility in Damascus. In a letter dated 1 June 2009, Syria responded to the Agency's request for an explanation concerning the presence and origin of the anthropogenic natural uranium particles found at the MNSR. In a letter to Syria dated 5 June 2009, the Agency followed up on Syria's explanation.

7. In a letter to Israel dated 20 May 2009, following up on Israel's letter of 24 December 2008, the Agency requested that Israel provide specific information concerning its statements about whether the munitions used in the destruction of the building at Dair Alzour could have been the source of the uranium particles found on the site.

8. In letters to the Agency, one dated 12 May 2009 and one dated 17 April 2009, received on 19 and 20 May 2009, respectively, Syria, inter alia, questioned the correctness of certain statements contained in reports, technical briefings and communications of the Agency.

9. In a letter dated 24 May 2009, Syria responded to the Agency's letter of 21 April 2009. Syria, inter alia, reiterated its earlier statements concerning the nature of the Dair Alzour installations, the water pumping infrastructure and procurement activities, and its statements regarding cooperation with entities from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The letter did not include any of the supporting documentation requested by the Agency.

10. In a letter dated 4 June 2009, the Agency responded to the concerns expressed by Syria in the three letters received by the Agency in May 2009. The Agency also reaffirmed the correctness of its statements and communications and provided comments on the points raised by Syria. The Agency reiterated its request that Syria provide, as a matter of transparency, information and supporting documentation about the past use and nature of the building at the Dair Alzour site, and information about the procurement activities, as well as access to other locations alleged to be related to Dair Alzour.

B. Agency Verification

11. The Agency has continued to investigate the allegations concerning the destroyed building on the Dair Alzour site. The information provided by Syria to date does not enable the Agency to determine the nature of the facility.

12. Since May 2008, the Agency has requested to have substantive discussions with Syria on this matter and has offered to share all of its satellite imagery, and imagery provided by other Member States. Syria has thus far declined to accept this offer.

13. As indicated in the Director General's last report (GOV/2009/9, para. 7), the Agency has assessed that there is a low probability that the uranium particles found at the Dair Alzour site were introduced by use of the missiles used to destroy the building on that site. Since that report, no progress has been made in substantiating Syria's explanation. The Agency is continuing with its assessment of the origin of the uranium.

14. In a letter dated 15 February 2009 responding to the Agency's letter of 3 July 2008, Syria provided information regarding the procurement of certain equipment and materials, specifically the water pumping equipment observed at the Dair Alzour site, a large quantity of graphite and large quantities of barium sulphate (GOV/2009/9, para. 4). Syria indicated that the procurement efforts were civilian and non-nuclear in nature and related, respectively, to civil water purification, the domestic Syrian steel industry and shielding material for radiation therapy centres. Syria provided further clarifications in its letter dated 24 May 2009. Based on the information currently available to the Agency, it is not in a position to confirm these explanations and, in its letter of 4 June 2009, requested further clarification from Syria.

15. In its letters dated 3 July 2008 and 21 April 2009, the Agency had requested information and clarification regarding allegations of activities of an import/export company from the DPRK with an office in Syria, and regarding cooperation between nuclear scientists from Syria and the DPRK. Syria provided explanations in its letters of 15 February 2009 and 24 May 2009 and denied the allegations. The Agency is assessing Syria's response.

16. The Agency has reiterated its request for information concerning three other locations allegedly functionally related to the Dair Alzour site (GOV/2008/60, para. 7). Syria has not yet responded to the Agency's requests for access to these sites as a transparency measure.

17. In May 2009, the Agency received the results of the analysis of routine environmental samples taken in August 2008 at the MNSR in Damascus. The results showed the presence of particles of anthropogenic natural uranium, of a type not declared at the facility, inside the hot cells and from associated equipment. On 1 June 2009, Syria provided a response to the Agency's request for an explanation concerning the presence and origin of these particles. In its response, Syria provided information about the use of the hot cells and the presence of natural uranium, but did not address the presence and origin of the anthropogenic uranium. In its letter of 5 June 2009, the Agency wrote to Syria following up on its response. The existence of a possible connection between these particles and those found at the Dair Alzour site requires further analysis by the Agency.

C. Summary

18. The presence of the uranium particles at the Dair Alzour site, the imagery of the site available to the Agency and certain procurement activities remain to be clarified. The information provided by Syria to date does not adequately support its assertions about the nature of the site. In order for the Agency to complete its assessment, Syria needs to be more cooperative and transparent.

19. The anthropogenic natural uranium particles found at the MNSR facility are of a type not included in Syria's declared inventory of nuclear material. The presence and origin of such particles, as well as those found at the Dair Alzour site, needs to be understood by the Agency.

20. The Director General urges Syria to provide at an early date additional information and supporting documentation, access to other locations alleged to be related to the Dair Alzour site and access to relevant locations for the sampling of destroyed and salvaged equipment and debris. As has previously been indicated to Syria, the Agency expresses its readiness to work out with Syria modalities for managed access that would enable Syria to protect sensitive and confidential information that is not relevant to the Agency's mandate, while enabling the Agency to perform its verification mission. It is clearly in Syria's interest to render to the Agency the necessary cooperation and transparency if it wishes the Agency to be able to corroborate its assertion about the nature of the Dair Alzour site. The Director General equally calls on Israel to cooperate with the Agency in its investigation. The Director General also calls on other States that may possess relevant information to make such information available to the Agency and to agree to the Agency's sharing of such information with Syria. These measures would assist the Agency in establishing the facts and making progress in its verification mandate.

21. The Director General will continue to report as appropriate.