

Board of Governors

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Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic

Report by the Director General

1. On 5 June 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/2009/36). The Board requested the Director General to keep it informed of developments, as appropriate. This report covers relevant developments since that date.
2. As the Board will recall, on 2 June 2008, the Director General informed the Board of Governors that, in May of that year, 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. That information further alleged that the reactor was under construction but not operational at the time of its destruction, and that it had been built with the assistance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).
3. The Agency visited the site on 23 June 2008, during which time, inter alia, environmental samples were taken. Analysis of the samples indicated the presence of particles of anthropogenic¹ natural uranium of a type not included in Syria's declared inventory of nuclear material. Syria has maintained that the building was destroyed by Israel and had been a military non-nuclear installation, and that Syria has not had nuclear cooperation with the DPRK (GOV/2009/36, para. 15). Syria has also stated that the origin of the anthropogenic natural uranium particles was the munitions used to destroy the building. In this context, Israel has not responded to the Agency's 20 May 2009 request for specific information needed to confirm whether the munitions used in the destruction of the building could have been the source of the anthropogenic natural uranium particles (GOV/2009/36, para. 7).
4. The Agency has repeatedly requested to have substantive discussions with Syria on the nature of the destroyed building, and to share with Syria satellite imagery and other information available to the Agency. Syria has thus far declined to have such discussions. While the Agency has continued its verification activities, its ability to confirm Syria's explanation regarding the past nature of the

¹ "Anthropogenic" refers to material that has been produced as a result of chemical processing.

destroyed building at the site (GOV/2008/60, para. 1) is severely impeded because Syria has not provided sufficient access to information, locations, equipment or materials.

5. As reported in the previous report to the Board of Governors, in a letter dated 4 June 2009, the Agency requested further clarification from Syria regarding the purpose of water pumping equipment seen at the Dair Alzour site, and the procurement of large quantities of graphite and barium sulphate, which Syria has stated were acquired for civilian and non-nuclear related uses (GOV/2009/36, para. 14). The Agency reiterated its request in a letter dated 23 July 2009. In a letter dated 13 August 2009, Syria responded to the Agency's letter of 4 June 2009, inter alia, reaffirming its earlier statements concerning the destroyed building and the Dair Alzour site infrastructure. Syria added that the October 2007 cancellation of the remaining supply of barium sulphate was unrelated to the destruction of the building at the Dair Alzour site. With the limited information provided by Syria, the Agency is not in a position to confirm Syria's statements regarding the purpose of the procurement of this equipment and material.

6. As indicated in the Director General's February 2009 report (GOV/2009/9, para. 7), the Agency has assessed that there is a low probability that the anthropogenic natural uranium particles found in samples taken from the Dair Alzour site were introduced by use of the missiles used to destroy the building on that site as asserted by Syria. In its 4 June 2009 letter, and again in its 23 July 2009 letter, the Agency requested access to the locations where the debris from the destroyed building, the remains of munitions, the debris from equipment and any salvaged equipment may have been and/or are located, for the purpose of taking samples and assessing the nature of the building (GOV/2009/36, para. 4).

7. In the letters dated 4 June 2009 and 23 July 2009, the Agency also reminded Syria of its earlier request for access to three other locations allegedly functionally related to the Dair Alzour site, suggesting that modalities be agreed in advance with Syria for the protection of any sensitive information related to the Dair Alzour site and the three other locations.

8. In its letter dated 13 August 2009, Syria also stated that the destroyed building had been under construction at the time of the bombing and, hence, could not have been the source of the anthropogenic natural uranium particles collected in the environmental samples. Syria also added that due to the disposal of the debris from the site, it was impossible to meet the Agency's request for access to the debris as the Agency's request had been made more than a year after the destruction of the building by Israel.

9. In that same letter, Syria stated that it had provided all the information it had regarding the questions raised by the Agency concerning the Dair Alzour site and that it did not accept that the anthropogenic natural uranium particles found in the environmental samples could be considered undeclared nuclear material. Syria also reiterated that, due to the military and non-nuclear nature of the Dair Alzour site and the three other locations, it had no obligation to provide more information under its Safeguards Agreement with the Agency. Syria emphasised its resolve to continue its cooperation with the Agency in accordance with its Safeguards Agreement and the Agency's Statute, provided that "this cooperation never infringes on the confidentiality of its defence capabilities, its sovereignty and its national security". The Agency is continuing its assessment of the information provided by Syria.

10. In relation to the presence of anthropogenic natural uranium particles at the Miniature Neutron Source Reactor (MNSR) in Damascus (GOV/2009/36, para. 17), Syria provided additional explanations about the possible origin of the particles in a letter dated 8 June 2009. In that letter, Syria stated its view that the natural uranium particles had resulted from the accumulation of sample and reference materials used in neutron activation analysis. In support of its statement, Syria provided a

list of standard reference materials used in those activities and some information on a related shielded transport container.

11. On 8 July 2009, the Agency performed a physical inventory verification (PIV) at the MNSR during which environmental samples were taken, as well as samples from the materials which Syria stated were the source of the anthropogenic natural uranium particles. The Agency is awaiting the results of the analyses of the samples.

Summary

12. Syria has cooperated with the Agency in its verification activities at the MNSR. The Agency is currently analysing samples taken at the MNSR.

13. Syria has not yet provided the necessary cooperation to permit the Agency to determine the origin of the anthropogenic natural uranium particles found in samples taken at the Dair Alzour site. Syria also did not cooperate with the Agency to confirm Syria's statements regarding the non-nuclear nature of the destroyed building on the Dair Alzour site and to determine what, if any, functional relationship existed between the Dair Alzour site and three other locations, or to substantiate Syria's claims regarding certain procurement efforts and its alleged foreign nuclear cooperation.

14. Syria has asserted that, in accordance with its Safeguards Agreement, it is under no obligation to provide further information concerning the Dair Alzour site or the other locations because of their military nature not related to any nuclear activities. However, as the Agency has previously explained to Syria, there is no limitation in comprehensive Safeguards Agreements on Agency access to information, activities or locations simply because they may be military related. The fact that the Agency has found particles of nuclear material of a type which is not in the declared inventory of Syria underscores the need to pursue this matter.

15. The Director General urges Syria to cooperate with the Agency in its verification activities so that, in accordance with its mandate under Syria's Safeguards Agreement, the Agency is able to ensure that safeguards are applied to all source and special fissionable material in all peaceful nuclear activities. Recognizing Syria's concerns about the sensitivity of certain information and locations, the Director General urges Syria to engage with the Agency to establish the necessary modalities for managed access to such information and locations to enable the Agency to establish the facts and make progress in its verification, while protecting Syria's sensitive military and other information at relevant locations. The Director General also calls on other States, including Israel, which may possess information relevant to the Agency's verification, including information which may have led them to conclude that the installation in question at the Dair Alzour site had been a nuclear reactor, to make such information available to the Agency.

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