

**IAEA**

Atoms for Peace and Development

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# Board of Governors

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GOV/2023/38, Add.1 and Add.2)

## Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic

*Report by the Director General*

### A. Introduction

1. On 26 August 2022, the Director General submitted a report to the Board of Governors on the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) (GOV/2022/41). This report covers relevant developments since that date.

### B. Background

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,<sup>1</sup> had been a nuclear reactor that was not yet operational and into which no nuclear material had been introduced. Information subsequently provided to the Agency included further allegations that the reactor was a gas cooled graphite moderated reactor, that it was not configured to produce electricity, that it had been built with the assistance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and that there were three other locations in Syria that were functionally related to the Dair Alzour site. By the end of October 2007, large scale clearing and levelling operations had taken place at the site which had removed or obscured the remains of the destroyed building.<sup>2</sup> Syria has

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<sup>1</sup> In March 2018, authorities in Israel acknowledged publicly that it destroyed a building at the Dair Alzour site; see the statement issued by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 21 March 2018 regarding the Dair Alzour Operation [PM Netanyahu Statement on September 2007 Deir ez-Zor Operation | Prime Minister's Office \(www.gov.il\)](https://www.gov.il/eng/press/2018/03/21/2018032101)

<sup>2</sup> GOV/OR.1206, para. 26; GOV/2008/60, para. 16.

maintained, since May 2008, that the destroyed building was a non-nuclear military installation and that Syria had had no nuclear-related cooperation with the DPRK.<sup>3</sup>

3. In June 2008, the Agency visited the Dair Alzour site and requested supporting documentation concerning the past and current use of the buildings at the Dair Alzour site and at three other locations allegedly functionally related to that site. Since that visit, Syria has not engaged substantively with the Agency on the nature of the Dair Alzour site or the three other locations.

4. In his report to the Board of Governors in May 2011,<sup>4</sup> the Director General provided the Agency's assessment that, based on all the information available to the Agency and its technical evaluation of that information, it was very likely that the building destroyed at the Dair Alzour site was a nuclear reactor which should have been declared to the Agency. Concerning the three other locations, the Agency was unable to provide an assessment concerning their nature or operational status.

5. On 9 June 2011, the Board of Governors adopted, by a vote, resolution GOV/2011/41, in which it, *inter alia*, found that Syria's undeclared construction of a nuclear reactor at Dair Alzour and failure to provide design information for the facility constituted non-compliance by Syria with its obligations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Agency in the context of Article XII.C of the Agency's Statute. The Board of Governors called upon Syria to remedy urgently its non-compliance and provide the Agency with updated reporting under its Safeguards Agreement and access to all information, sites, material and persons necessary for the Agency to verify such reporting and resolve all outstanding questions so that the Agency could provide the necessary assurances as to the exclusively peaceful nature of Syria's nuclear programme. The Board also decided to report, as provided for in Article XII.C of the Statute, through the Director General, Syria's non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement to all Members of the Agency and to the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Board requested the Director General to continue his efforts to implement fully the Agency's Safeguards Agreement with Syria and to report any significant developments to the Board and to the Security Council, as appropriate, and decided to remain seized of the matter.

6. During a meeting with the Agency in Damascus on 25 and 26 October 2011, a proposal by Syria regarding possible future actions that focused solely on the Dair Alzour site was discussed.<sup>5</sup> After careful review, the Agency concluded that the proposal was not acceptable given the conditions placed by Syria on Agency verification activities at the site and the omission of the three other locations from the scope of the proposal. The Agency subsequently proposed to Syria to hold further discussions. In a letter to the Agency dated 20 February 2012, Syria indicated that it would provide a detailed response at a later time, noting the difficult prevailing security situation in the country. To date, the Agency has not received any such response from Syria on information to resolve outstanding questions regarding the Dair Alzour site and the three other locations.

## C. Developments

7. The Agency carried out a physical inventory verification (PIV) at the miniature neutron source reactor (MNSR) in Damascus on 29 May 2023.

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<sup>3</sup> GOV/2009/36, para. 15.

<sup>4</sup> GOV/2011/30, para. 33.

<sup>5</sup> GOV/2012/42, para. 7.

8. The Agency continues to monitor, through the review of open source information, including satellite imagery, the MNSR, the Dair Alzour site and other locations of safeguards relevance to the Agency.

9. As previously reported, the Director General, in a letter to Syria in May 2022, indicated that he was prepared to meet the Syrian authorities to discuss the unresolved issues.

10. Following last year's report to the Board of Governors, the Director General continued to call on Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency in connection with unresolved issues related to the Dair Alzour site and other locations. Syria did not respond to those calls.

11. The Director General, in a letter to H.E. Mr Faisal Mekdad, Syria's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, in August 2023, reiterated his willingness to engage with Syria with a view to discussing the unresolved issues. He indicated that he was prepared to visit Damascus to discuss and agree on a suitable arrangement that would allow Syria and the Agency to demonstrate their resolve to make progress on this matter that has been on the agenda of the Board of Governors for many years. In the same letter, the Director General also expressed his confidence that Syria would seize this opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to cooperate fully and constructively with the Agency on the implementation of Syria's NPT Safeguards Agreement.

## **D. Conclusion**

12. Since last year's report, no new information has come to the knowledge of the Agency that would have an impact on the Agency's assessment that it was very likely that the building destroyed at the Dair Alzour site was a nuclear reactor that should have been declared to the Agency by Syria. Concerning the three other locations, the Agency remains unable to provide any assessment concerning their nature or operational status.

13. The Director General reiterates his call on Syria to take the opportunity to address a long outstanding issue and to demonstrate its commitment to cooperate fully and constructively with the Agency on the implementation of safeguards pursuant to Syria's NPT Safeguards Agreement.