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Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)

Report by the Director General

1. This report of the Director General to the Board of Governors and, in parallel, to the United Nations Security Council (Security Council), is on the Islamic Republic of Iran's (Iran's) implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). It provides an update on developments related to Agency monitoring and surveillance equipment in Iran in relation to the JCPOA since the Director General's previous quarterly report.¹

Agency monitoring and surveillance equipment

Background

2. As previously reported, following Iran's decision to stop the implementation of the voluntary measures as envisaged in the JCPOA, as of 23 February 2021, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the Agency agreed a temporary technical understanding to permit the continued operation and servicing of its monitoring equipment under the JCPOA,² with the collected data stored under seal in Iran. This understanding was intended to enable the Agency to recover continuity of knowledge of the activities covered by the monitoring equipment, if and when Iran resumed implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA.³

¹ GOV/2022/24.

² Agency surveillance cameras beyond those required for Agency verification activities in Iran under its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, the On-Line Enrichment Monitoring (OLEM) equipment installed at the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) and the Flow-rate Unattended Monitoring equipment installed at the Khondab Heavy Water Production Plant.

³ GOV/2021/10, para.12.

3. Iran has continued to permit the Agency to service its monitoring equipment at the necessary three-month intervals, with the data collected during this period being stored under seal in Iran. Following an incident at the centrifuge component workshop at Karaj in June 2021, some of the Agency's equipment was damaged and data lost. While Iran permitted the Agency to install replacement surveillance cameras at Karaj in December 2021, it is not certain that no production had taken place there before the Agency cameras were installed. Iran also subsequently permitted the Agency to install additional cameras at two new centrifuge component workshops at Esfahan and Natanz.

4. While this loss of data means it would not be possible for the Agency to recover full continuity of knowledge of Iran's centrifuge rotor tube and bellows production since 23 February 2021, it would enable the Agency to ensure that, if and when Iran resumed implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, Iran's declarations under the JCPOA of its production and stockpiles of these components were consistent with all information available to the Agency, including the data collected by its surveillance cameras.

Recent Developments

5. In a letter dated 8 June 2022, Iran informed the Agency that the "Agency's cameras as well as On-Line Enrichment Measurement (OLEM) device in FEP... and flow meter in the HWPP which have been utilized beyond Iran's CSA commitments, will be removed",⁴ and requested that the Agency make the necessary arrangements for the presence of inspectors in this respect.

6. On 9 June 2022, Agency inspectors removed the Agency's surveillance cameras from the Tehran Research Centre and from the two centrifuge component workshops at Esfahan. The cameras and the data collected from them have been placed in storage at the respective locations under Agency seals as agreed with the AEOL.

7. The Director General is gravely concerned by the consequences of this action. Through the removal of this equipment, Iran removes the possibility for the Agency to have full confidence – in the event of a full resumption of implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA – that all the centrifuges, uranium ore concentrate and heavy water produced by Iran since February 2021 would have been declared to the Agency. This decision also could have detrimental implications, not only for the prospect of a return to the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, but also for the Agency's ability to provide assurance of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

8. Provided the existing data remains stored under Agency seal, and the Agency is able to re-install its surveillance and monitoring equipment after only a short interruption – no more than three to four weeks – the Agency may still be able to assess the consistency of Iran's declarations related to its JCPOA nuclear-related commitments based on the monitoring data collected so far. A longer interruption would inevitably require significantly more stringent safeguards measures in order for the Agency to be able to confirm the consistency of Iran's declarations.

9. The Director General appeals to Iran to work with the Agency without delay in order to maintain the possibility of a credible continuation of the Agency's verification and monitoring of Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA.

10. The Director General is willing to engage Iran as soon as possible and will continue to report to the Board, as appropriate.

⁴ As of 8 June 2022, there were 27 Agency cameras installed in Iran dedicated to monitoring under the JCPOA.