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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

A. Introduction

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) and on matters related to verification and monitoring in Iran in light of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). It also provides information on financial matters, and the Agency's consultations and exchanges of information with the Joint Commission, established by the JCPOA.

B. Background

2. On 14 July 2015, China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States of America,¹ with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (E3/EU+3) and Iran agreed on the JCPOA. On 20 July 2015, the Security Council adopted resolution 2231 (2015), in which, inter alia, it requested the Director General to "undertake the necessary verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear-related commitments for the full duration of those commitments under the JCPOA" (GOV/2015/53 and Corr.1, para. 8). In August 2015, the Board

¹ On 8 May 2018, the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, announced that the "United States will withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal", 'Remarks by President Trump on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action', at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-joint-comprehensive-plan-action/>.

of Governors authorized the Director General to implement the necessary verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear-related commitments as set out in the JCPOA, and report accordingly, for the full duration of those commitments in light of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), subject to the availability of funds and consistent with the Agency's standard safeguards practices. The Board of Governors also authorized the Agency to consult and exchange information with the Joint Commission, as set out in GOV/2015/53 and Corr.1.

3. In December 2016 and January 2017, the Director General shared with Member States nine documents,² developed and endorsed by all participants of the Joint Commission, providing clarifications for the implementation of Iran's nuclear-related measures as set out in the JCPOA for its duration.³

4. On 8 May 2019, Iran issued a statement including, inter alia, that "...in implementation of its rights set forth in Paragraph 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, the Supreme National Security Council the Islamic Republic of Iran has issued an order to stop some of Iran's measures under the JCPOA from today".^{4,5}

5. On 5 January 2020, Iran announced that its nuclear programme would no longer be "subject to any restrictions in the operational sphere" and that Iran would continue to cooperate with the Agency "as in the past".⁶ To date, the Agency has not observed any changes to Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA in connection with this particular announcement or in the level of cooperation by Iran in relation to Agency verification and monitoring activities under the JCPOA.

6. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, on 1 June 2020, Iran informed the Agency that it has decided to stop implementing another nuclear related commitment within the area of centrifuge research and development relevant to Iran's announcement of 5 September 2019⁷ (see para. 23 of this report).

7. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel arrangements, the Agency has maintained its verification and monitoring activities in Iran. This was due mainly to the Agency contracting and use of chartered aircraft services for the transport of inspectors to and from Iran. The cost of this arrangement was met from additional extrabudgetary support from Member States, and its implementation was facilitated by the exceptional cooperation of the Republic of Austria and Iran.

8. The estimated cost to the Agency for the implementation of Iran's Additional Protocol and for verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments as set out in the JCPOA is €9.2 million per annum. For 2020, extrabudgetary funding is necessary for €4.0 million of the €9.2 million.⁸ As of 28 May 2020, €4.2 million of extrabudgetary funding had been pledged to meet the cost of JCPOA-related activities for 2020 and beyond.

² Reproduced in INFCIRC/907 and INFCIRC/907/Add.1.

³ GOV/2017/10, para. 3.

⁴ Announced by H.E. Dr Hassan Rouhani, President and Head of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran, at: <http://president.ir/en/109588>.

⁵ GOV/INF/2019/8, GOV/INF/2019/9, GOV/INF/2019/10, GOV/INF/2019/12, GOV/INF/2019/16 and GOV/INF/2019/17.

⁶ <http://irangov.ir/detail/332945>.

⁷ GOV/INF/2019/10.

⁸ The cost of the provisional application of Iran's Additional Protocol (€3.0 million) and €2.2 million for the inspector costs related to the verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear-related commitments as set out in the JCPOA are being met from the regular budget (GC(63)/2).

C. JCPOA Verification and Monitoring Activities

9. Since 16 January 2016 (JCPOA Implementation Day), the Agency has verified and monitored Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments in accordance with the modalities set out in the JCPOA,⁹ consistent with the Agency's standard safeguards practices, and in an impartial and objective manner.^{10,11} The Agency reports the following for the period since the issuance of the Director General's quarterly report of March 2020.¹²

C.1. Activities Related to Heavy Water and Reprocessing

10. Iran has not pursued the construction of the Arak heavy water research reactor (IR-40 Reactor) based on its original design.^{13,14} Iran has not produced or tested natural uranium pellets, fuel pins or fuel assemblies specifically designed for the support of the IR-40 Reactor as originally designed, and all existing natural uranium pellets and fuel assemblies have remained in storage under continuous Agency monitoring (paras 3 and 10).¹⁵

11. Iran has continued to inform the Agency about the inventory of heavy water in Iran and the production of heavy water at the Heavy Water Production Plant (HWPP)¹⁶ and allowed the Agency to monitor the quantities of Iran's heavy water stocks and the amount of heavy water produced at the HWPP (para. 15). As previously reported,¹⁷ on 17 November 2019, the Agency verified that Iran's stock of heavy water had exceeded 130 metric tonnes (para. 14). On 11 May 2020, the Agency verified that the HWPP was in operation and that Iran's stock of heavy water was 132.6 metric tonnes.^{18,19}

⁹ Including the clarifications referred to in para. 3 of this report.

¹⁰ GOV/2016/8, para. 6.

¹¹ Note by the Secretariat, 2016/Note 5.

¹² GOV/2020/5.

¹³ The calandria was removed from the reactor and rendered inoperable during preparation for Implementation Day and has been retained in Iran (GOV/INF/2016/1, Arak heavy water research reactor, paras 3(ii) and 3(iii)).

¹⁴ As indicated previously (GOV/2017/24, footnote 10), Iran has changed the name of the facility to the Khondab Heavy Water Research Reactor.

¹⁵ The paragraph references in parentheses throughout Sections C and D of this report correspond to the paragraphs of 'Annex I – Nuclear-related measures' of the JCPOA.

¹⁶ HWPP is a facility for the production of heavy water which, according to the design information provided by Iran to the Agency on 25 January 2016, has a nominal capacity of 16 tonnes of nuclear-grade heavy water per year and an actual capacity of "about 20 tonnes" of nuclear-grade heavy water per year. Iran informed the Agency, in a letter dated 18 June 2017, that the "maximum annual capacity of the Heavy Water Production Plant (HWPP) is 20 Tons".

¹⁷ GOV/INF/2019/17.

¹⁸ On 11 May 2020, the Agency confirmed that in this reporting period, 5.1 metric tonnes of heavy water had been shipped out of Iran and Iran had used 1.4 metric tonnes of heavy water for research and development (R&D) activities related to the production of deuterated compounds for medical applications: these quantities are not included in the stock of heavy water. As of the same date, the Agency verified that Iran had purified 1.7 metric tonnes of heavy water from 1.9 metric tonnes of contaminated heavy water which had resulted from the production of deuterated compounds: the 1.7 metric tonnes is included in Iran's stock of heavy water. All of the activities described in this footnote were conducted under continuous monitoring by the Agency.

¹⁹ On 1 June 2020, Iran informed the Agency that "the operator of HWPP intends to overhaul the plant from 2020-06-21 for about the 1 month".

12. Iran has not carried out activities related to reprocessing at the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) and the Molybdenum, Iodine and Xenon Radioisotope Production (MIX) Facility or at any of the other facilities it has declared to the Agency (paras 18 and 21).²⁰

C.2. Activities Related to Enrichment and Fuel

13. Iran has continued the enrichment of UF₆ at the Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) and the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP) (see Section C.3 of this report) at Natanz,²¹ and at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP) at Fordow.²² As previously reported,²³ on 8 July 2019, the Agency verified that Iran had begun enriching UF₆ above 3.67% U-235 (para. 28). Since that date, Iran has been enriching uranium up to 4.5% U-235. Iran has also continued to conduct certain enrichment activities that are not in line with its long-term enrichment and R&D enrichment plan, as provided to the Agency on 16 January 2016 (para. 52).²⁴

14. At FEP, for enrichment of UF₆, Iran has continued to use no more than 5060 IR-1 centrifuges installed in 30 cascades, which remain in the configurations in the operating units at the time the JCPOA was agreed (para. 27). Iran has withdrawn 96 IR-1 centrifuges from those held in storage²⁵ for the replacement of damaged or failed IR-1 centrifuges installed at FEP (para. 29.1).

15. At PFEP, as previously reported,²⁶ Iran has modified the header connections so that the product and the tails are collected separately from the cascades in five R&D lines (Nos 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)²⁷ (paras 32 and 42), all of which are being used for enrichment of UF₆ (see Section C.3 of this report).

16. At FFEP, the Agency has verified that nuclear material has been present since 6 November 2019, and Iran has been conducting uranium enrichment (para. 45) in one wing (Unit 2) of the facility since 9 November 2019.²⁸ Since 22 January 2020, Iran has been using a total of six cascades, containing 1044 IR-1 centrifuges, to enrich UF₆ (para. 46). On 30 May 2020, the Agency also verified at FFEP that in the remaining space of Unit 2, 12 IR-1 centrifuges were installed in a layout of 16 IR-1 centrifuge positions²⁹ and one IR-1 centrifuge was installed in a single position,³⁰ for the purpose of conducting “initial research and R&D activities related to stable isotope production”.³¹ In summary, the Agency has verified that 1057 IR-1 centrifuges are installed in Unit 2 of FFEP (para. 46).

²⁰ Including hot cells at TRR and the MIX facility and shielded cells, referred to in the decision of the Joint Commission of 14 January 2016 (INFCIRC/907).

²¹ GOV/INF/2019/12.

²² Under the JCPOA, “[f]or 15 years the Natanz enrichment site will be the sole location for all of Iran’s uranium enrichment related activities including safeguarded R&D” (para. 72).

²³ GOV/INF/2019/9.

²⁴ See GOV/INF/2019/10, GOV/INF/2019/12, GOV/INF/2019/16 and Section C.3 of this report.

²⁵ Para. 17 of this report.

²⁶ GOV/INF/2019/10, para. 4.

²⁷ As previously reported, in R&D line 1 Iran rendered inoperable a cascade of IR-1 centrifuges by, inter alia, removing the rotors, injecting epoxy resin into the pipework and removing the electrical systems from all of the centrifuges (see GOV/INF/2016/1, ‘Centrifuge Research and Development (15.4)’, para. ix).

²⁸ GOV/2019/55, para. 15.

²⁹ GOV/2017/48, footnote 20.

³⁰ On 29 January 2018, Iran provided the Agency with updated design information for FFEP, which included a temporary setup for a single IR-1 centrifuge position for “separation of stable isotopes” in Unit 2.

³¹ GOV/2016/46, para. 12.

17. All centrifuges and associated infrastructure in storage have remained under continuous Agency monitoring (paras 29, 47, 48 and 70). The Agency has continued to have regular access to relevant buildings at Natanz, including all of FEP and PFEP, and performed daily access upon Agency request (para. 71). The Agency has also continued to have regular access to FFEP, including daily access upon Agency request (para. 51).

18. On 30 May 2020, the Agency verified that all irradiated TRR fuel elements in Iran have a measured dose rate of no less than 1 rem/hour (at one metre in air).

19. On 23 April 2020, the Agency verified the receipt in Iran from another State of the second increment of 5 kg of U_3O_8 enriched up to 20% U-235 contained in partially fabricated TRR fuel plates.³²

20. Iran has not operated any of its declared facilities for the purpose of re-converting fuel plates or scrap into UF_6 , nor has it informed the Agency that it has built any new facilities for such a purpose (para. 58).

C.3. Centrifuge Research and Development, Manufacturing and Inventory

21. As previously reported,³³ in November 2019, Iran further updated the design information questionnaire (DIQ) for PFEP, in which it included the list of all centrifuge types at PFEP.³⁴

22. On 1 June 2020, the Agency verified that Iran was continuing to accumulate enriched uranium from R&D lines 2 and 3 (paras 32–42) through feeding UF_6 into cascades of up to: 20 IR-4 centrifuges; 10 IR-5 centrifuges; 10 IR-6 centrifuges and another cascade of 20 IR-6 centrifuges; 20 IR-6s centrifuges; and 10 IR-s centrifuges. The following single centrifuges were being tested with UF_6 but not accumulating enriched uranium: one IR-2m centrifuge; one IR-3 centrifuge; two IR-4 centrifuges; one IR-5 centrifuge; three IR-6 centrifuges; one IR-6m centrifuge; one IR-6sm centrifuge; one IR-7 centrifuge; two IR-8 centrifuges; one IR-8s centrifuge; one IR-8B centrifuge; two IR-s centrifuges; and one IR-9 centrifuge. On 1 June 2020, the Agency verified that Iran was also continuing to accumulate enriched uranium from R&D lines 4, 5³⁵ and 6 (paras 32–42) through feeding UF_6 into a cascade of 164 IR-4 centrifuges, a cascade of 164 IR-2m centrifuges and a cascade of 135 IR-6 centrifuges, respectively.³⁶

23. On 1 June 2020, Iran informed the Agency that, “[i]n order for adapting PFEP to the R&D activities, the operator intends to remove all of the inoperable centrifuge casings and their related pipelines in Cascade (No.1)”, and that “[t]he Cascade (No.1) of PFEP will be modified for R&D activities in near future”, and the DIQ will “be updated accordingly” (para. 41).

³² On 28 May 2018, Iran requested the return to Iran of the second increment of 5 kg of U_3O_8 enriched up to 20% U-235 contained in partially fabricated fuel plates for fabrication of finished fuel elements for the TRR, which it had transferred out of Iran prior to Implementation Day. On 22 June 2018, the Agency notified the Joint Commission and State parties involved that the conditions for the return of the second increment of 5 kg of U_3O_8 enriched up to 20% U-235 had been met (decision of the Joint Commission of 24 December 2015 (INF/CIRC/907)).

³³ GOV/2019/55, para. 21.

³⁴ IR-1, IR-2m, IR-3, IR-4, IR-5, IR-6, IR-6m, IR-6s, IR-6sm, IR-7, IR-8, IR-8s, IR-8B, IR-s and IR-9.

³⁵ GOV/INF/2019/10, para. 4.

³⁶ GOV/INF/2019/12, para. 3.

24. On 27 May 2020, the Agency verified that, for periods of four to ten days, Iran had conducted at different times mechanical testing of up to six IR-4 centrifuges simultaneously, and up to ten IR-6 centrifuges simultaneously. This testing took place at the Tehran Research Centre and at a workshop in Natanz (para. 40). As of 18 May 2020, Iran had not started using a new location, beyond those specified in the JCPOA, for mechanical testing of centrifuges.³⁷

25. Iran has provided declarations to the Agency of its production and inventory of centrifuge rotor tubes and bellows and permitted the Agency to verify the items in the inventory (para. 80.1). The Agency has conducted continuous monitoring, including through the use of containment and surveillance measures, and verified that the declared equipment has been used for the production of rotor tubes and bellows to manufacture centrifuges not only for the activities specified in the JCPOA but also for activities beyond those specified in the JCPOA, such as the installation of the cascades described in paragraph 22 above (para. 80.2). Iran has not produced any IR-1 centrifuges to replace those that have been damaged or failed (para. 62).

26. All declared rotor tubes, bellows and rotor assemblies have been under continuous monitoring by the Agency, including those rotor tubes and bellows manufactured since Implementation Day (para. 70). On 18 May 2020, the Agency verified that Iran was continuing to manufacture centrifuge rotor tubes using carbon fibre that was not subject to continuous Agency containment and surveillance measures.^{38,39} The rotor and bellow manufacturing process remains under continuous monitoring by the Agency.

C.4. Enriched Uranium Stockpile

27. As previously reported,⁴⁰ on 1 July 2019, the Agency verified that Iran's total enriched uranium stockpile had exceeded 300 kg of UF₆ enriched up to 3.67% U-235 (or the equivalent in different chemical forms) (para. 56). The quantity of 300 kg of UF₆ corresponds to 202.8 kg of uranium.⁴¹

28. As of 20 May 2020, the Agency verified that, based on the JCPOA and decisions of the Joint Commission,⁴² Iran's total enriched uranium stockpile, comprising enriched uranium produced at FEP, PFEP and FFEP⁴³ was 1571.6 kg (+550.7 kg since the previous quarterly report). The stockpile comprised 1546.7 kg of uranium in the form of UF₆; 9.7 kg of uranium in the form of uranium oxides and their intermediate products; 7.7 kg of uranium in fuel assemblies and rods; and 7.5 kg of uranium in liquid and solid scrap.

29. The total enriched uranium stockpile comprises 215.1 kg of uranium enriched up to 3.67% U-235⁴⁴, produced prior to 8 July 2019, and 1356.5 kg of uranium enriched up to 4.5% U-235, produced since 8 July 2019. The latter, which is entirely in the form of UF₆, includes 483.1 kg of uranium enriched up to 2% U-235 produced in R&D lines 2 and 3 at PFEP.

³⁷ GOV/2019/55, para. 24.

³⁸ GOV/INF/2019/12, para. 6.

³⁹ Decision of the Joint Commission of 14 January 2016 (INFCIRC/907).

⁴⁰ GOV/INF/2019/8.

⁴¹ Considering the standard atomic weight of uranium and fluorine.

⁴² Decisions of the Joint Commission of 6 January 2016 and 18 December 2016 (INFCIRC/907), and 10 January 2017 (INFCIRC/907/Add.1).

⁴³ Under the JCPOA, "[f]or 15 years the Natanz enrichment site will be the sole location for all of Iran's uranium enrichment related activities including safeguarded R&D" (para. 72).

⁴⁴ The difference compared to the corresponding figure contained in GOV/2020/5, para. 28 is due to further processing of some of the nuclear material by Iran.

D. Transparency Measures

30. Iran has continued to permit the Agency to use on-line enrichment monitors and electronic seals which communicate their status within nuclear sites to Agency inspectors, and to facilitate the automated collection of Agency measurement recordings registered by installed measurement devices (para. 67.1). Iran has issued long-term visas to Agency inspectors designated for Iran as requested by the Agency, provided proper working space for the Agency at nuclear sites and facilitated the use of working space at locations near nuclear sites in Iran (para. 67.2).

31. Iran has continued to permit the Agency to monitor – through measures agreed with Iran, including containment and surveillance measures – that all uranium ore concentrate (UOC) produced in Iran or obtained from any other source is transferred to the Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF) at Esfahan (para. 68). Iran also provided the Agency with all information necessary to enable the Agency to verify the production of UOC and the inventory of UOC produced in Iran or obtained from any other source (para. 69).

E. Other Relevant Information

32. Iran continues to provisionally apply the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement in accordance with Article 17(b) of the Additional Protocol, pending its entry into force. The Agency has continued to evaluate Iran's declarations under the Additional Protocol.

33. As previously reported,⁴⁵ in January 2019, the Agency detected natural uranium particles of anthropogenic origin at a location in Iran not declared to the Agency. During January 2020, pursuant to information provided by Iran related to the possible origin of the detected natural uranium particles, the Agency took environmental samples at two declared nuclear facilities in Iran. The analysis of these samples has been delayed by the inability of analytical laboratories participating in the network of analytical laboratories (NWAL) to perform analysis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

34. The Agency's verification and monitoring of Iran's other JCPOA nuclear-related commitments continues, including those set out in Sections D, E, S and T of Annex I of the JCPOA.

35. During this reporting period, the Agency has attended one meeting of the Procurement Working Group of the Joint Commission (JCPOA, Annex IV – Joint Commission, para. 6.4.6).

F. Summary

36. The Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material at the nuclear facilities and locations outside facilities where nuclear material is customarily used (LOFs) declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement. Evaluations regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities for Iran are ongoing.

37. Since Implementation Day, the Agency has been verifying and monitoring the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA.

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

⁴⁵ GOV/2019/55, para. 29.