



James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies
Middlebury Institute of International Studies
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The Middle East Next Generation of Arms Control Specialists Network
Fostering Today, Tomorrow's Middle East Arms Control Leaders

Statement by the Middle East Next Generation of Arms Control Specialists Network (MENACS) to the 2015 Meeting of States Parties to the 1972 Biological And Toxin Weapons Convention

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to participate as an observer to this important Meeting of States Parties. Thank you for the opportunity. I am speaking today on behalf of the Middle East Next Generation of Arms Control Specialists Network (MENACS), a network of emerging experts from the Middle East, which operates under the auspices of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) and is led by Dr. Chen Kane.

Mr. Chairman,

MENACS was established in 2010 with the objective of developing and promoting region-based approaches to arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament. We do so through capacity building, training, regional dialogue, knowledge dissemination, and teaching by example. The Network members are emerging experts in their 20s and 30s from throughout the Middle East. They have experience working in academia, think tanks, governments, and international organizations. The Network focuses on projects, which its members identify, fundraise for, and implement.

The Network facilitates and supports the involvement of and cooperation between emerging specialists from the region and advances a new discourse on issues related to WMD, arms control, and regional security. With members from throughout the region having expertise in political, technical and scientific fields, MENACS has been developing and promoting cooperative, region-based approaches in the Middle East, in a unique climate of collaboration.

Mr. Chairman,

We are present at this meeting for the purpose of introducing a new initiative of the Network that may appeal to some of the national delegations present here today. As part of the Network's

objectives to strengthen capacity in the region, as well as to enhance nonproliferation, our members request the opportunity to work with Middle East delegations in their preparations for the 2016 BWC Review Conference. As emerging experts, we offer our services for free to assist your delegations in conducting research, reporting, documentation, and speech writing as part of your preparation for next year's meeting. If a country so chooses, MENACS members may also join your delegation during the Review Conference. Network members that are not paired with a specific delegation will attend as observers. We want to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Norway in supporting this regional capacity building initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

This project builds upon successful CNS initiatives to participate at the NPT Preparatory Committees and Review Conferences where over two-dozen past and present students and staff serve as members of national and international organization delegations. It also builds upon several training workshops the Network attended. In the context of a wider Track II initiative, MENACS participated in the work of a high-level task force that examined technical issues related to a Middle East WMD-free zone, and which developed a series of recommendations on biological weapons elimination, prevention, detection, and response. The group also attended a discussion on the scientific capabilities within the Middle East region for investigation of disease outbreaks, and explored options for building response capacities through new analysis tools, including enhanced microbial forensic competencies. This initiative was covered at length by Mr. Chris Bidwell's statement on behalf of the Federation of American Scientists.

Mr. Chairman,

As emerging experts, working with delegations would be very valuable to us, helping us acquire important experience in how countries prepare for multilateral nonproliferation treaty sessions, gain additional research experience, and see the work that goes on behind the scenes in support of the BWC Review Conference. It is also a unique opportunity for us to determine if nonproliferation and multilateral negotiation is a field we would like to devote our careers to. As we are proud to be from the Middle East, we welcome the opportunity to highlight the good work that is being done in the region that furthers the mission of the BWC.

MENACS members are particularly well-suited to assist Middle Eastern delegations in this endeavor given their knowledge of the region and its languages, which provides the ability to research in local languages and thus increases the amount of available information to be reported. We are also able to assist with language translation and can report information in either English or Arabic.

Our members are diverse in experience. We are made up of professors, scientists, researchers, and graduate students. Our range of expertise, experience, and language skills will, of course, be appropriately considered when pairing a member with a particular Middle Eastern delegation in order to best benefit that country.

Mr. Chairman,

We will participate at this important meeting for the duration of the week, taking the opportunity to learn about the BWC review process and multilateral negotiations and to be available to discuss the project further with any Middle East delegation that may be interested. We welcome the opportunity to discuss MENACS work further with all of you.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, for your time and attention.

Tiara Shaya
MENACS Coordinator and Research Associate
James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies
www.MENACS.org
tshaya@miis.edu