FACT SHEET

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF
ACTS OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM

Background

In 1996, the United Nations Secretary-General prepared a report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/53 in which he reviewed existing international legal instruments relating to international terrorism (A/51/336). The Secretary-General concluded that there was a need to elaborate international treaties or other kinds of instruments in areas not covered by existing treaties. Among the measures proposed by the Secretary-General was preventing the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by terrorists.

Subsequently, the General Assembly established an Ad Hoc Committee through adoption of resolution 51/210 to elaborate, among other things, a draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT).


Key provisions

- ICSANT provides a wide definition on materials and facilities covering both military and peaceful applications.
- It criminalizes the planning, threatening, or carrying out acts of nuclear terrorism; it also requires States to criminalize these offenses via national legislation and to establish penalties in line with the gravity of such crimes.
- It requires for States to take all practicable measures to prevent and counter preparations for offenses to take place inside or outside of their territories.
- The Convention does not cover the activities of armed forces during an armed conflict or military exercise.
- It provides innovative provisions dealing with post-crisis situations concerning the handling of seized radioactive material, devices or nuclear facilities, as well as on modalities of return and storage thereof.

Together with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), ICSANT is one of the two pillars of the efforts of the United Nations in confronting the global challenge of nuclear terrorism. Together they form the basis of the action plan of the United Nations, which was agreed upon at the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit.
While ICSANT provides an important multilateral, legal framework for countering terrorist threats, the Convention does not yet have universal participation and does not provide for a treaty based enforcement or monitoring mechanism.

Other nuclear security instruments

ICSANT is part of a broader framework of multilateral efforts to address nuclear security. Other key instruments include multilateral treaties as well as resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII.

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<th>KEY NUCLEAR SECURITY INSTRUMENTS</th>
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