

Iran's current path of nuclear escalation risks provoking a serious crisis

Thank you Mr President.

I start by thanking USG Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing. We welcome the Secretary General's twelfth report on the implementation of resolution 2231 and thank the Secretariat for their continued professionalism and support.

Thanks also to Ambassador Byrne-Nason and His Excellency Olaf Skoog for their briefings and again to Ambassador Byrne-Nason for her, and her team's work, as 2231 Facilitator.

The UK has consistently demonstrated our commitment to resolution 2231 and the JCPOA. Our priority is to see the US return to the agreement and Iran to return to compliance. We are negotiating in Vienna towards this goal.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, the latest talks in Vienna resumed on 29 November, five months after Iran broke them off. During these talks Iran has introduced new maximalist demands, many of which go beyond the JCPOA. The process is not moving fast enough and time is running out.

At the same time, Iran's nuclear escalation is undermining international peace and security and the global non-proliferation system. Iran has continued to develop a ballistic missile programme, which is inconsistent with resolution 2231.

It is important that this Council focuses on the gravity of the current situation. The Iranian nuclear programme has never been more advanced than it is today.

Iran's total stockpile contains enough fissile material that, if enriched further, could produce several nuclear weapons. Iran is producing Highly Enriched Uranium, which is unprecedented for a state without a nuclear weapons programme and is producing uranium metal, which provides weapons-applicable knowledge.

And since February, Iran has curtailed monitoring by the IAEA, in violation of resolution 2231; and since 2019, failed to cooperate with the Agency on safeguards investigations. Iran has also failed to implement its bilateral agreement with the IAEA to service cameras and allow access to the Karaj site. So we call on Iran to restore fully all accesses under 2231, to implement its legal obligations with the Agency without delay.

We have reached a fork in the road. We hope that Iran will choose to conclude a fair and comprehensive deal that would benefit the Iranian people and nation. If Iran continues its current path of nuclear escalation, in weeks, not months, it will be responsible for collapsing the JCPOA and provoking a

serious crisis, which would require a robust response from this Council.