



## VOICES

# The Integrated Field Exercise 2014: Its importance for peace and stability in the Middle East

BY PRIME MINISTER  
ABDULLAH ENSOUR OF JORDAN

This is why Jordan has chosen to fully embrace all treaties and instruments aimed at nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

This important step demonstrates to our neighbours, in a clear and verifiable way, that Jordan's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful in nature. Our need for energy, which can only be fully met by including nuclear energy in the mix, is evident: As the fourth water-poorest country in the world, Jordan depends on energy-intensive desalination plants to sustain its growing population.

### ALL PEACE-LOVING NATIONS SHOULD EMBRACE THE CTBT

Of all the relevant international norms, the CTBT in particular should come naturally to peace-loving countries. By banning nuclear test explosions, this Treaty prevents the military use of nuclear technology, blocking the path to the one weapon capable of ending human civilization. Unlike other multilateral instruments, the CTBT has no repercussions whatsoever for the civilian use of nuclear technology.

"Jordan has always spared no effort, since the time of my father, His Majesty the late King Hussein, to avoid nuclear proliferation and a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, which would have unimaginable consequences well beyond our region. Not only have we signed every major international treaty and convention to prevent nuclear proliferation and secure nuclear materials, but we have also long been strong advocates for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. It is a major challenge, but one that we must meet."

With these words His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn described Jordan's unwavering commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in 2012.

### A THREAT OF NIGHTMARISH PROPORTIONS

Why is it so essential that our kingdom rises to this challenge? Jordan finds itself surrounded by a ring of fire: the Syrian tragedy, in which Jordan shelters more refugees than any other country, the simmering Arab-Israeli dispute and escalating tensions in Iraq, all exacerbated by a difficult economic climate and dwindling natural resources.

In this volatile security environment, the proliferation of nuclear weapons would be the straw that broke the camel's back. In particular, the notion of nuclear weapons in the hands of a multitude of hostile, not necessarily rational actors is a threat of nightmarish proportions for regional and global security.

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The CTBT's entry into force would mark a milestone on the way to a world free of nuclear weapons. It would show progress in the disarmament promise made by nuclear weapon States decades ago and thus strengthen the international commitment to the NPT. It would certainly give fresh momentum to the aspiration of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

A key consideration for any arms control treaty is its verifiability. When North Korea conducted nuclear tests in 2006, 2009 and again in 2013, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) detected the events reliably and precisely, making the data available to Member States in near real-time. The CTBTO seismic station hosted by Jordan at Tel-Alasfar, near the border with Syria, contributed to the analysis of these events.

### **A MATTER OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY**

The capability to receive and analyse CTBTO monitoring data through its CTBT National Data Centre is an expression of national sovereignty, especially against the background of Jordan's membership in the United Nations Security Council in 2014 and 2015. Independent of the most technologically advanced countries, Jordan is now able to arrive at its own assessment of suspicious events, should any country – regrettably – decide to conduct a nuclear test.

In addition to detecting nuclear tests, CTBTO monitoring data have proven valuable for other purposes, such as natural disaster warning, studies of the Earth's inner structures and climate change research. Jordanian experts have participated in CTBTO workshops and training activities to build national expertise in this regard.

### **PARTICIPANTS FROM DIFFERENT MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES WORKING SIDE BY SIDE**

Jordan has chosen to actively support the CTBTO by offering to host the next full-scale on-site inspection exercise, the Integrated Field Exercise 2014.

This will be the second such simulation conducted by the organization since the last exercise in Kazakhstan in 2008. The successful demonstration of the CTBTO's operational capabilities to conduct an on-site inspection under realistic conditions will further strengthen the case for the Treaty's entry into force.

The exercise will also have an important symbolic dimension: with over 200 participants, it will bring together experts from every continent. All Middle Eastern countries have been invited to work side by side for the common cause of strengthening global security.

### **EAGER TO PROVIDE UTMOST SUPPORT**

It fills me with pride that the 182 other CTBTO Member States chose Jordan to host the Integrated Field Exercise 2014 in a competitive process. The Dead Sea area provides the perfect topography and geology for a realistic and challenging on-site inspection simulation, and the

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Experts from Jordan were amongst the 100 participants at the National Data Centre workshop in Vienna, 12–16 May 2014.

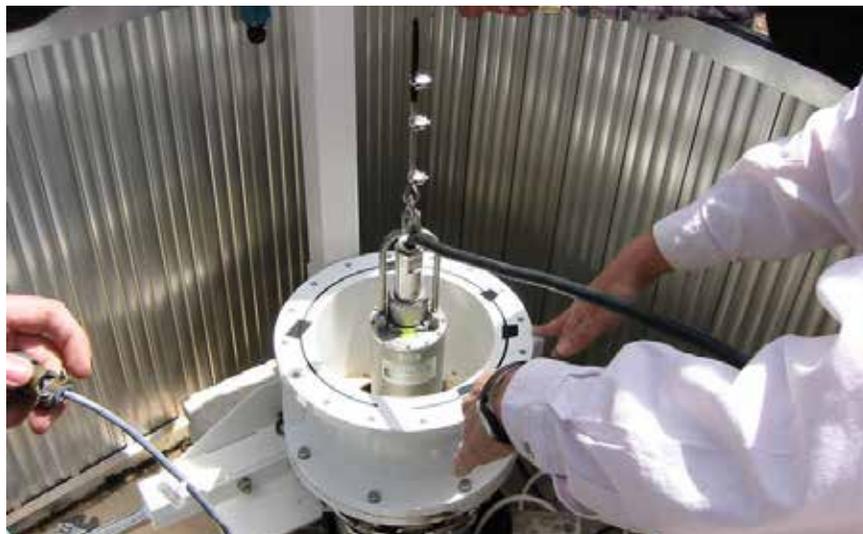
Dead Sea itself, with its modern resorts, is the perfect location to re-energize after a long day in the field.

Furthermore, our experts in all parts of the Jordanian government are eager to provide their utmost support to the exercise, as I assured CTBTO Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo during his visit to Amman in December 2013. In the words of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein, "First and foremost are our people: talented, educated, tech-savvy and globally aware."

The agencies involved, many of which have contributed to the variety of CTBTO exercises and workshops that Jordan has hosted since 2003, include the Natural Resources Authority, the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission, the Jordan Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Health, as well as the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

The Integrated Field Exercise will in turn augment the technical and professional skills of our experts and scientists in the field because they will be able to familiarize themselves with state-of-the-art technology, methods and equipment. This will increase, for example, our country's expertise in detecting airborne radioactivity and radioactive noble gases. The discussion on the participation of Jordan's scientific and academic community in the exercise made a promising start with a roundtable discussion hosted by the Middle East Scientific Institute for Security in late 2013.

I wish Executive Secretary Zerbo and his team a successful and instructive Integrated Field Exercise 2014. This event will mark the beginning of a safer



Installation of the borehole seismometer for auxiliary seismic station AS56 at Tel-Alasfar, Jordan  
Image courtesy of Walid Mohammad.



The Integrated Field Exercise 2014 will take place in the Dead Sea area, Jordan.

and brighter future for the Middle East and the world.

In anticipation of this event, I would like to bid all participants a heartfelt welcome to beautiful and hospitable Jordan.

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#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

##### **ABDULLAH ENSOUR**

was appointed as the Prime Minister of Jordan in October 2013. His first ministerial post was as Minister of Planning in 1984. He has held various cabinet positions in Jordanian governments since then, including Minister of Education, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Industry and Trade, Minister of Higher Education, Minister of Administrative Development and Minister of Information. Dr Ensour has also served as governor of Jordan to the World Bank and deputy of Jordan to the International Monetary Fund.