UN Nuclear Conference Votes Down Anti-Israel Resolution

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An Arab-led attempt to censure [Israel](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/israel.htm) over its "nuclear capabilities" failed Thursday, with states backing the Jewish state at the U.N atomic agency's annual meeting voting down a resolution critical of the Jewish state. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the result as a "great victory."

Israel has yet to formally declare its widely-known status as a nuclear weapons state — a status that Arab nations and [Iran](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/iran.htm) insist presents the greatest threat to Mideast peace. That view is opposed not only by Israel but also the United States and other Western nations that for years have said that Iran's potential to make such arms is the key danger in the region.

Like in past years, Arab states, backed by Iran and many nonaligned nations, forced a vote on their resolution expressing "concern about the Israeli nuclear capabilities" and urging the Jewish state to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. And like at most previous meetings, those opposed were in the majority — but this time by a more lopsided margin. Of nations present for the vote, 43 were in favor, 61 were against and 33 abstained.

The vote is symbolic, with the meeting having no enforcing powers. But Israel is at odds with the U.S. and its allies over the nuclear deal struck with Iran, with Netanyahu alleging that it fails to strip Tehran from the ability to make atomic arms, and his comments Thursday appeared in part to be aimed at mending fences.

"I welcome the fact that the gap in Israel's favor was significantly larger than the votes in previous years," he said in a statement. "I thank all those countries that supported Israel, especially the U.S, [Australia](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/australia.htm) and Canada. I thank the EU for voting as a single bloc in favor of Israel against the decision."