



The Zangger Committee

At a Glance

The Zangger Committee (also known as the NPT Exports Committee or ZAC) is tasked with maintaining a Trigger List of nuclear materials and equipment that are subject to safeguards in accordance with the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty \(NPT\)](#). Currently, there are 38 states party and the European Union is a permanent observer.

History

The Zangger Committee was [formed](#) in 1971 following the establishment of the NPT to be the interpreting body of Article II paragraph 2 of the NPT. The committee was created to develop a Trigger List, the first one being published in September 1974. It was named after its first chairman, Claude Zangger.

Overview

The [Trigger List](#) is a list of source or special fissionable materials and equipment designed or prepared for the processing, use, or production of special fissionable materials. All items on this Trigger List “trigger” a requirement for safeguards and guidelines (“common understandings”), which govern the export of these items to non-nuclear weapon states not party to the NPT. The guidelines in Article II paragraph 2 of the NPT establish three conditions of supply for Trigger List items being sent to non-nuclear weapon states: a non-explosive use assurance, an IAEA safeguards requirement, and a re-transfer provision that requires the receiving state to apply the same conditions when re-exporting these items. The Trigger List is published as IAEA document [INFCIRC/209](#) and has had six major amendments, which were made in accordance with technological advancements that identified the need to amend the list to match evolving threats. Each of these amendments either added materials to the list, provided clarifications, or both.

Decisions made by the ZAC are not binding and are not enforced by a treaty, so it is left up to states to request the IAEA Director General to publish declarations of the policies being put in place unilaterally by the states involved. The committee developed the voluntary system of “Annual Returns,” which confidentially allows member states to exchange information on the licenses and exports for any non-nuclear weapon state not party to the NPT. This is done annually in April.

How ZAC Impacts Nuclear Security

The committee’s development of the Trigger List provides an accessible way for states parties of the NPT to understand clearly which materials and equipment must be most safely guarded and tracked. Having the Zangger Committee’s digestible interpretation of Article II paragraph 2 of the NPT through the Trigger List is a way in which the international nuclear community can ensure all parties are well educated on these important technicalities of the NPT. This can prevent the materials and equipment on the list from being unchecked, unlicensed and diverted away from non-peaceful purposes. It is also up to the committee to take account of changing security threats and adapt export control criteria according to these evolving threats. The Committee meets twice per year in Vienna, once in May and once in October.