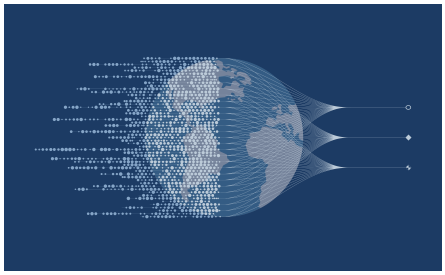

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Expanding the CTBTO's Role as a Public Communicator in Addressing Disinformation Post-Entry into Force

Thursday 11 September 2025 10:30 (15 minutes)

The CTBTO is renowned for its success in building up the CTBT verification regime, collecting and analyzing data, and sharing timely information with state signatories to monitor compliance with the Treaty. Post-entry into force (EIF), the CTBTO could broaden its role as a public communicator to address disinformation surrounding allegations of nuclear testing. A notable example of this potential was PTS's handling of two high-profile seismic events on 5 October 2024 in Iran. Amid loud speculation that these events were covert nuclear tests, PTS dispelled the disinformation and de-escalated tensions, demonstrating the organization's ability to counter misinformation through science-based transparency as a trusted public communicator. This paper identifies the political and legal hurdles that may impede the organization's ability to assume such a role post-EIF within the Treaty framework and proposes strategies to overcome them. Beyond, a dedicated team, specializing in disinformation response and science communication, comprising experts from OES, IMS and IDC with broad geographic representation is recommended. Expanding this public-facing role would position the CTBTO as a trusted arbiter of truth in the information war era, enhancing the verification regime's credibility and underscoring the value of multilateralism and science-driven diplomacy in addressing global security threats.

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