

Israel moves to curb strike at nuclear plant

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Israel's government approved Sunday emergency measures to end a "disruptive" months-long strike over pay by scientists working at the country's top secret nuclear research centre.

Scientists at the Dimona Nuclear Research Centre have been on a slowdown strike for the past three months after their demand for a wage increase was refused.

Israel is believed to be the Middle East's sole nuclear power but has long refused to confirm or deny that it has such weapons, and the Dimona plant officially focuses on research and energy provision.

"The government unanimously approved the request of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission head to implement emergency regulations that would enable the issuing of back-to-work orders to employees of the Nuclear Research Centre," the [prime minister](#)'s office said.

The slowdown was "disrupting activities essential to Israel" and the decision to issue the orders came in the wake of "an immediate risk" to production at the facility, the statement said.

It said back-to-work orders would be issued for up to 50 scientists who must return to full duties within three months.

The US-based Institute for Science and International Security estimated in 2015 that Israel had 115 nuclear warheads.

At the same time, Israel strongly opposed alleged efforts by other regional powers, most notably its arch-foe Iran, to obtain nuclear weapons. Iran says its nuclear programme is strictly for civilian purposes.

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