

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 25 March 2019 from the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to our letter dated 20 February 2019 ([S/2019/177](#), annex), France, Germany and the United Kingdom wish to bring to the attention of the Security Council recent actions undertaken by Iran which are inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), regarding Iran's ballistic missile programme.

As the Security Council will be aware, paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) states:

Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology, until the date eight years after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action adoption day or until the date on which the International Atomic Energy Agency submits a report confirming the Broader Conclusion, whichever is earlier.

France, Germany and the United Kingdom are concerned that the events outlined in the present letter form part of a trend of increased activity inconsistent with the above-mentioned provisions in the resolution, which were intended to provide the international community with the confidence that Iran was not actively developing missiles that could serve as a means of delivery for a nuclear weapon.

Definitions

In forming an assessment of what constitutes a “ballistic missile designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”, we have used the performance characteristics of Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 systems. These comprise rocket systems capable of delivering at least a 500-kilogram payload to a range of at least 300 kilometres. These specifications represent recognized minima for the mass of a nuclear warhead and the distance required to ensure self-preservation after delivery. Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 systems have been recognized by long-standing international consensus as being the systems of most concern with respect to weapons that are capable of delivering a nuclear payload.

The criteria for the classification of delivery systems of weapons of mass destruction, defined in the Missile Technology Control Regime annex, have also been adopted among non-Missile Technology Control Regime members, including with respect to implementing obligations under Security Council resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).



“Designed to be capable”, in this context, means having the capabilities by virtue of technical design, regardless of claimed intent.

Further instances of activity inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015)

(a) *Launch of Safir space launch vehicle*

On 6 February 2019, the Iranian Deputy Defence Minister, General Ghassem Taghizadeh, announced the launch of a Dousti satellite using the Safir space launch vehicle.¹ The Safir is a two-stage liquid propellant space launch vehicle based on the Shahab-3 and the control motors from the Khorramshahr ballistic missile. Both the Khorramshahr and the Shahab-3 fulfil Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 criteria. Thus, the Safir meets the criteria of Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 missile systems. Furthermore, the technologies necessary for the conception, fabrication and launch of a space launch vehicle are closely related to those required for the development of long-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles. Space launch vehicle launches also provide Iran with empirical results that can be used to optimize capabilities related to the development of these missile systems.

(b) *Unveiling of Dezful surface-to-surface ballistic missile*

On 7 February 2019, the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps unveiled a new variant of the surface-to-surface ballistic missile Fateh-110, named “Dezful”,² which it claimed to have a range of 1,000 kilometres. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps described the missile as having a smaller size and weight than the Zolfaghar missile, but with twice the destructive power. Iranian public display posters suggested that the Zolfaghar has a range of 700 kilometres with a warhead of 579 kilograms, which falls into Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 criteria. The Dezful, with a broadly similar size and longer range, is therefore highly likely to meet Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 criteria.

(c) *Variation of Khorramshahr ballistic missile*

Iran has previously claimed that its Khorramshahr ballistic missile carries a large, 1,500-kilogram unitary re-entry vehicle and that this heavy vehicle kept the missile’s performance within Iran’s 2,000-kilometre range limit for the “defensive use of ballistic missiles”. On 4 February 2019, during a public display in Tehran marking the Ten Days of Dawn, Iran revealed a variant of the Khorramshahr ballistic missile with a manoeuvring re-entry vehicle.³ Iran has previously demonstrated manoeuvring re-entry vehicle technology on its 1,700-kilometre range Emad and 700-kilometre range Zolfaghar and Qiam ballistic missiles. The new Khorramshahr manoeuvring re-entry vehicle is physically too small to weigh 1,500 kilograms but is similar in size to the 750-kilogram Emad manoeuvring re-entry vehicle. Modelling the Khorramshahr booster with this smaller re-entry vehicle indicates the missile’s maximum range is likely to have increased from 2,000 kilometres to approximately 3,000 kilometres. The Khorramshahr is therefore potentially an intermediate-range ballistic missile.

¹ “Iran to Launch Satellite Dousti Soon”, *Financial Tribune*, 3 February 2019. Available from <https://financialtribune.com/articles/sci-tech/96537/iran-to-launch-satellite-dousti-soon>.

² “US vows ‘relentless’ action to deter Iran missile programme”, *Al-Jazeera*, 6 February 2019. Available from www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/vows-relentless-action-deter-iran-missile-programme-190208053056366.html.

³ Tom O’Connor, “Iran shows off new long-range missiles to celebrate 40 years of revolution”, *Newsweek*, 4 February 2019. Available from www.newsweek.com/iran-long-range-missiles-revolution-1317663.

Conclusion

We therefore re-emphasize our assessment that Iran's development and launching of ballistic missiles is inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and follows previous inconsistent activity, as notified in our letters dated 20 February 2019, as well as 18 December and 20 November 2018 ([S/2018/1171](#) and [S/2018/1062](#)). Iran's ballistic missile activity remains a matter of deep concern as it has a destabilizing effect on the region and increases existing tensions.

We trust that this information will assist the Security Council in promoting the implementation of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) by all States. In light of the requests made of the Secretary-General in resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), we therefore respectfully request that the Secretary-General report fully and thoroughly on Iranian ballistic missile activity inconsistent with resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) in his next report.

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Permanent Representative of Germany

(Signed) Karen **Pierce**
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