



Security Council

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Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)

Sixteenth report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. Progress with regard to the Iranian nuclear issue has fallen short of the expectations of the participants in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the international community. Despite repeated calls for all parties concerned to renew dialogue and engagement aimed at a return to the full and effective implementation of the Plan and Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), diplomatic efforts remain at a standstill. While the current challenges to restoring the Plan are complex, I remain of the view that the Plan still represents the best available option for ensuring the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and urge all parties to focus on their shared objectives of non-proliferation and regional security.

2. Calls remain on the Islamic Republic of Iran to refrain from taking further steps away from the full implementation of the Plan and to undo the steps it has taken since July 2019, which it had pledged were reversible. The United States of America would also need to lift or waive its sanctions as outlined in the Plan and to extend the waivers with regard to the trade in oil with the Islamic Republic of Iran. These measures are essential for preserving the Plan's primary objectives.

3. In its most recent report,¹ the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that its "verification and monitoring has been seriously affected by the cessation of Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA". The Agency has not been able to verify the total stockpile of enriched uranium in the Islamic Republic of Iran since February 2021, but it estimated that, as of 28 October 2023, the total stockpile of enriched uranium was 4,486.8 kg (which exceeds the 202.8 kg limit), including 599.8 kg enriched to 20% U-235 and 130.3 kg enriched to 60% U-235. The Agency also noted that, "in the event of a full resumption of implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA", the Agency would need "to establish a new baseline" with regard to centrifuge and heavy water production.

4. The present report provides an assessment of the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) since the issuance of my fifteenth report (S/2023/473) on 29 June 2023. Consistent with previous reports, the focus of the present report is on the relevant provisions set forth in annex B to the resolution, namely restrictions applicable to

¹ See the Agency's report of 15 November 2023.



nuclear-related transfers, ballistic missile-related activities and transfers, as well as the assets freeze.²

II. Key findings and recommendations

5. The Secretariat examined the debris of a cruise missile used in an attack on the Dabbah oil terminal in Yemen in November 2022, and observed design characteristics and components consistent with those of cruise missiles used in prior attacks by the Houthis and assessed by the Secretariat to be of Iranian origin. The Secretariat further observed that all these missiles appear to have the same design characteristics, structure and components as the newly unveiled Iranian-made “Paveh” cruise missile.

6. The Secretariat also examined ballistic missile components reportedly seized by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in February 2023 from a vessel travelling in international waters in the Gulf of Oman and observed design characteristics and subcomponents consistent with those of ballistic missiles previously examined and assessed to be of Iranian origin.

III. Implementation of nuclear-related provisions

7. Since 29 June 2023, there have been no new proposals to participate in or permit the activities set forth in paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) submitted to and approved by the Security Council through the procurement channel. The Security Council has received three new notifications during the reporting period pursuant to paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) for certain nuclear-related activities consistent with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that do not require approval, but do require a notification to the Council or both the Council and the Joint Commission.

8. The United States renewed waivers with respect to certain nuclear non-proliferation projects foreseen in the Plan and the nuclear-related provisions in annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) for another 180-day period. The waivers cover operations, training and services related to Unit 1 of the Bushehr nuclear power plant; the transfer of enriched uranium out of the Islamic Republic of Iran in exchange for natural uranium; the transfer into the Islamic Republic of Iran of enriched uranium for the Tehran Research Reactor and the transfer out of the Islamic Republic of Iran of nuclear fuel scrap and spent nuclear fuel; the transfer, warehousing or other appropriate storage outside of the Islamic Republic of Iran of Iranian heavy water; the preparation and modification of the Fordow facility; and the modernization of the Arak reactor.

IV. Implementation of provisions related to paragraphs 3 and 4

A. Restrictions on paragraph 3-related activities by the Islamic Republic of Iran

9. In paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), the Security Council called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic

² Pursuant to paragraph 7 (b) of resolution 2231 (2015) and paragraphs 3, 4 and 6 (c) and (d) of annex B to that resolution, the restrictions on missile-related activities and transfers, as well as the assets freeze, applied only until 18 October 2023, the date that marks eight years since Adoption Day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The present report covers the implementation of those provisions until that date.

missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology.

10. In letters dated 9 October and 21 November 2023 addressed to the President of the Security Council and me (S/2023/747 and S/2023/895), the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany and the United Kingdom and the Permanent Representative of Israel informed me about the launch of the Qased space launch vehicle by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 27 September 2023. According to those representatives, that space launch vehicle makes use of technology of an Iranian ballistic missile that is “capable of delivering nuclear weapons” and they therefore asserted that the launch was inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

11. In letters dated 11 October and 27 November 2023 addressed to the President of the Security Council and me (S/2023/753 and S/2023/917), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran rejected the “unsubstantiated allegations” made by France, Germany, Israel and the United Kingdom and reiterated the position that its country’s missile and space programmes fell “outside of the purview or competence of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and its annexes”. The Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, in a letter dated 17 October 2023 addressed to the President of the Security Council and me (S/2023/785), reiterated that the parameters of the Missile Technology Control Regime were never intended to be used in the context of resolution 2231 (2015) to ascertain whether certain missiles were designed to be capable of carrying nuclear weapons and noted that the Russian Federation remained of the view that the Islamic Republic of Iran was “respecting in good faith the relevant call addressed to it in paragraph 3 of Annex ‘B’ to resolution 2231 (2015)”.

B. Restrictions on paragraph 4-related transfers to or from the Islamic Republic of Iran

12. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), all States, provided that they have obtained prior approval from the Security Council on a case-by-case basis, may participate in and permit the supply, sale or transfer to or from the Islamic Republic of Iran of all items, materials, equipment, goods and technology set out in document S/2015/546 and of any items, materials, equipment, goods and technology that the State determines could contribute to the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems. Document S/2015/546 includes ballistic missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicle systems (including target drones, reconnaissance drones and cruise missiles), all capable of a range equal to or greater than 300 km, and related items, materials, equipment, goods and technology.

13. Paragraph 4 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) also applies to the provision of various services or technical assistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran and its acquisition of an interest in any commercial activity in another State, related to the supply, sale, transfer, manufacture or use of the items, materials, equipment, goods and technology as described in its subparagraph (a).

14. At the invitation of the Government of Yemen, the Secretariat examined the debris of a cruise missile used in an attack by the Houthis on the Dabbah oil terminal in November 2022,³ alleged to have been transferred by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Houthis in a manner inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015). The Secretariat

³ The Maritime Executive, “Houthi rebels strike Yemeni oil terminal for the second time”, 21 November 2022. Available at: <https://maritime-executive.com/article/houthi-rebels-strike-yemeni-oil-terminal-for-the-second-time>.

conducted direct and in-depth examinations of the debris. The Secretariat observed numerous similarities (such as design, configuration, dimensions, manufacturers and the format of part numbering) between components observed among the new debris under examination in Yemen in 2023, and previously examined components found in the debris of the cruise missiles⁴ used by the Houthis in prior attacks on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates,⁵ as well as the cruise missile components seized by the United Kingdom and the United States aboard various vessels in international waters⁶. The Secretariat assessed that the cruise missile used in the November 2022 attack, which was similar to the cruise missiles used by the Houthis in other attacks on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates between 2019 and 2022, was also of Iranian origin and may have been transferred from the Islamic Republic of Iran in a manner inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015).

15. The prior assessment was corroborated by the recent unveiling of a new Iranian cruise missile, designated as “Paveh”.⁷ Notably, two of the “Paveh” antennae⁸ are identical to antennae previously observed by the Secretariat among the items seized by the British Royal Navy in January and February 2022 in international waters south of the Islamic Republic of Iran (see S/2022/912, para. 18). The Secretariat also examined new images⁹ of a jet engine previously exhibited by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2016 (see S/2020/531, paras. 24 and 33). Based on a detailed analysis of all open-source images and videos, the Secretariat determined that this newly unveiled cruise missile and the jet engine appear to have identical or similar design characteristics, structure and components to those of the cruise missiles and jet engines used in the aforementioned attacks on Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen and seized by the United Kingdom and the United States.

16. The Secretariat also travelled to the United Kingdom, at the invitation of the British authorities, to examine ballistic missile components seized by the British Royal Navy in February 2023 from a vessel travelling in international waters in the Gulf of Oman¹⁰ (see also my previous report S/2023/473, paras. 14–16). The Secretariat examined an inertial navigation system and a re-entry vehicle nose cone. The inertial navigation system and its components had design characteristics and markings similar to components observed among the debris of ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis towards Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (see, for example, my reports S/2018/602, paras. 28–30, and S/2022/490, paras. 18–19). The Secretariat had not previously examined such a nose cone but could observe that the

⁴ The debris included parts of the jet engine, fuel feed system, steering system, electronic components and the cruise missile frame.

⁵ These attacks occurred in Saudi Arabia in 2019, 2020 and 2021 and in the United Arab Emirates in 2022.

⁶ The Secretariat previously examined and reported on these systems and components to the Security Council in S/2019/934, para. 31, S/2020/531, paras. 32–35, S/2022/490, para. 20 and S/2022/912, para. 18.

⁷ The missile was observed during a military parade held on 22 September 2023 (see <https://nournews.ir/En/News/151634/Iran-parades-hypersonic,-cruise-missiles-as-Raisi-lauds-defense-achievement> and <https://newsmedia.tasnimnews.com/Tasnim/Uploaded/Image/1402/06/31/1402063115350884028395494.jpg>) and also showcased at the Permanent Exhibition of Achievements and Capabilities of the Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Tehran (see www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/09/20/2959220/russian-defense-minister-observes-irgc-weapons and <https://twitter.com/projectmeshkat/status/1720175539560874419>).

⁸ An altimeter antenna and a global navigation satellite system (GNSS) antenna.

⁹ See <https://twitter.com/projectmeshkat/status/1695051660920258794>.

¹⁰ Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, “Royal Navy ship seizes weapons transiting in the Gulf”, 2 March 2023. Available at www.gov.uk/government/news/royal-navy-ship-seizes-weapons-transiting-in-the-gulf.

format for its numbering was similar to the format for numbering of several components found among the aforementioned ballistic missile debris.

17. Regarding the alleged transfer of uncrewed aerial vehicles from the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation referred to in my two most recent reports (S/2022/912, para. 19 and S/2023/473, paras. 17–19), I received a letter from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine on 2 August 2023 in which he reaffirmed his readiness to facilitate a visit of the Secretariat to examine the debris of uncrewed aerial vehicles in Ukraine. In letters dated 4 August 2023 and 11 September 2023 addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me (S/2023/581 and S/2023/661), the Permanent Representative of the United States shared her concern about the “continued transfer of hundreds of unmanned aerial vehicles from Iran to Russia in violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)”. She also shared information that, in her view, “provides additional clear evidence of Iran’s unauthorized supply of unmanned aerial vehicles to Russia in violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)”, and requested the Secretary-General to “assess the evidence and reach an independent conclusion”.

18. In letters dated 25 August 2023 and 4 October 2023, addressed to the President of the Security Council and me (S/2023/628 and S/2023/736), the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation disputed the allegations made by the United States that the Islamic Republic of Iran had transferred uncrewed aerial vehicles to the Russian Federation in a manner inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015), stating that those allegations follow “the pattern of the groundless allegations spread previously in the Security Council” and lacked “any credible arguments” and were “accompanied by speculative assumptions”. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a letter dated 15 September 2023 addressed to me (S/2023/683) also rejected the allegations made by the United States in the aforementioned letter dated 11 September, stating that the “so-called evidence” presented in that letter was “utterly fabricated and devoid of any legal validity”.

19. In October 2023, at the invitation of the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, together with the representatives of several Member States, the Secretariat attended a briefing organized by the United Kingdom and the United States. During the briefing, there were displays of various weapon systems, including debris of uncrewed aerial vehicles. The uncrewed aerial vehicles debris was reportedly recovered from Russian attacks against Ukraine in late 2022, as well as from attacks against targets in northern Iraq for which the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of the Islamic Republic of Iran had publicly claimed responsibility.¹¹

20. In identical letters dated 29 November 2023 addressed to the President of the Security Council and me (S/2023/928 and S/2023/929), the Permanent Representative of Israel drew attention to the multiple launches of ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as uncrewed aerial vehicles, by the Houthis towards Israel in October and November 2023. The Permanent Representative claimed that these missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles were transferred to the Houthis by the Islamic Republic of Iran before 18 October 2023, in a manner inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015). In a letter dated 4 December 2023 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/951), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran referred to these allegations as “entirely groundless and unequivocally rejected”. He emphasized that his country has “consistently adhered to the provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and remains steadfast in fulfilling its obligations under the resolution”. The Secretariat noted that the information provided by Israel is

¹¹ Tasnim News Agency, “Over 70 ballistic missiles hit terrorists in northern Iraq: IRGC Commander”, 29 September 2022. Available at www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2022/09/29/2781165/over-70-ballistic-missiles-hit-terrorists-in-northern-iraq-irgc-commander.

broadly consistent with statements¹² made and a video of the launches¹³ released by the Houthis, concerning the attack dates and types of weapon systems used. While the Secretariat cannot confirm the authenticity of that video, or of open-source images of cruise missile debris reportedly recovered in Jordan,¹⁴ the Secretariat did note that the displayed weapon systems resemble those used in multiple other Houthi attacks since 2018 and assessed by the Secretariat to be of Iranian origin. The Secretariat could not independently determine whether the weapon systems launched by the Houthis in October and November 2023 are of Iranian origin and were transferred before 18 October 2023.

V. Implementation of the asset freeze provisions

21. During the reporting period, the Secretariat received information from a Member State alleging that an entity on the list of individuals and entities maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015) had changed its legal name and was operating under that new name. The Secretariat was unable to corroborate this information.

VI. Secretariat support provided to the Security Council and its Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015)

22. The Secretariat has continued to support the work of the Security Council, in close cooperation with the Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). It has also continued to liaise with the Procurement Working Group of the Joint Commission on matters related to the procurement channel. In addition, the Secretariat has provided induction briefings for the incoming members of the Council to assist them in their work on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015).

23. As the restrictive measures set out in paragraphs 3, 4, 6 (c) and (d) of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) expired on 18 October 2023, the Secretariat subsequently revised the Security Council website by updating information concerning resolution 2231 (2015), including removing the list of 23 individuals and 61 entities subject to the restrictive measures contained in paragraphs 6 (c) and (d). Corresponding changes were made to the United Nations Security Council Consolidated List.¹⁵

¹² See https://twitter.com/Yahya_Saree/status/1719350529006981287; https://twitter.com/Yahya_Saree/status/1719817628057846155; https://twitter.com/Yahya_Saree/status/1721673267541332146; https://twitter.com/Yahya_Saree/status/1722720934946013437; https://twitter.com/Yahya_Saree/status/1724560224709705839; and https://twitter.com/Yahya_Saree/status/1727419599795409148.

¹³ See <https://twitter.com/AuroraIntel/status/1719644349816770628>.

¹⁴ See <https://twitter.com/BashaReport/status/1719408013079929224>.

¹⁵ The updated version of the Consolidated List is available at www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list.