



Security Council

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Letter dated 4 August 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to underscore the United States' concern about the continued transfer of hundreds of unmanned aerial vehicles from Iran to Russia in violation of United Nations Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). It is clear that Russia will continue to use these weapons to intensify its bombardment of Ukraine, as we have seen Russia do repeatedly in recent weeks attacking grain infrastructure in Ukraine following its withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

According to media reports, Russia used Iranian-made drones to strike Ukraine's ports and grain-holding facilities two times in the last 11 days, most recently on 1 August at the port of Izmail on the Danube River. This follows a similarly destructive attack on 23 July, which also reportedly employed Iranian drones.

Consequently, the United States urges the Security Council to insist on full implementation of all obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions. In particular, and consistent with resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), the Secretary-General should exercise without further delay his authority to order an investigation of Iran and Russia's violations of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), and report back to the Security Council with any findings no later than 31 August 2023.

The United States last wrote to the Security Council in October 2022 detailing our concerns about these destabilizing and illegal weapons transfers. In recent months, Russia has not only procured hundreds of additional Mohajer- and Shahed-series unmanned aerial vehicles from Iran, in clear violation of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), but is also now working with Iran to produce them inside Russia. Specifically, Russia is receiving materials from Iran needed to build an unmanned aerial vehicle manufacturing plant inside Russia. This plant could be fully operational early next year. If completed, the plant would dramatically enhance Russia's capacity to attack Ukraine and enable Russia's ongoing campaign to disable Ukraine's power plants, close its rail lines and prevent agricultural goods from transiting to world markets.

Paragraph 4 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) prohibits the transfer from Iran of all items, materials, equipment, goods and technology set out in [S/2015/546](#), unless approved in advance by the Security Council on a case-by-case basis. Both Mohajer- and Shahed-series unmanned aerial vehicles meet the parameters of [S/2015/546](#) under category II because they are capable of a range equal to or greater than 300 km. Iran and Russia have clearly violated their obligations under resolution



[2231 \(2015\)](#) by participating in these transfers without seeking approval from the Security Council.

Additionally, Mohajer-series unmanned aerial vehicles are manufactured by Qods Aviation, which is subject to the asset freeze provision of paragraph 6 (d) of annex B to Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). All States are required to ensure that funds or financial assets are prevented from being made available by their nationals to or for the benefit of designated entities. Therefore, any financial transactions between Russia and Qods Aviation would constitute a violation of this resolution.

There is extensive, publicly available documentation, photographs and video of Russia deploying these unmanned aerial vehicles in continuous attacks against Ukraine, including numerous deplorable attacks on Ukrainian cities that have targeted civilian infrastructure. Just last week, media outlets cited statements by Ukrainian officials that 15 Shahed-136 drones had been used by Russia to attack and destroy grain warehouses and other facilities at Ukraine's ports of Reni and Izmail. These attacks also reportedly wounded six people.

More recently, during the night of 1–2 August, media reports indicate Russia once again attacked Izmail, reportedly using Iranian drones to damage additional port infrastructure. These incidents are only the latest examples of how Russia is deploying Iranian drones in Ukraine as part of its broader campaign to starve the world of vital grain.

Ukrainian air defences also reportedly shot down Shahed drones over several districts of Kyiv on the night of 1–2 August, and up to 35 Shahed-series drones over Kyiv on 8 May. It is undeniable that the transfer and subsequent use of these weapons resulted in civilian deaths and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. Easily identifiable remnants of Iranian-origin unmanned aerial vehicles have since been recovered in Ukraine.

The United States requests, as we did in October 2022, that the United Nations Secretariat team responsible for monitoring implementation of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) conduct a technical and impartial investigation that assesses the type of unmanned aerial vehicles involved in these transfers in the light of the prohibitions contained in the resolution.

The United States offers its full cooperation with the Secretariat and the Security Council in reviewing these transfers in accordance with the requirements of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#).

The United States continues to support full and effective implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions.

I request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Linda **Thomas-Greenfield**

Ambassador

Representative of the United States to the United Nations
