



Security Council

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Letter dated 31 January 2022 from the representatives of France, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Further to our letter dated 10 August 2021 ([S/2021/724](#)), France, Germany and the United Kingdom wish to bring to the attention of the Security Council recent actions undertaken by Iran that are inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), regarding Iran's ballistic missile programme.

As the Security Council is 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 (IAEA) submits a report confirming the Broader Conclusion, whichever is earlier.

In forming an assessment of what constitutes a “ballistic missile designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”, we have applied the performance characteristics of the Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 systems. These comprise rocket systems capable of delivering a payload of at least 500 kg to a range of at least 300 km, the 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 are recognized through long-standing international consensus as being the systems of most concern with respect to the delivery capability for a nuclear payload. These criteria have been widely used among members and non-members of the Missile Technology Control Regime, 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.

Ballistic missile launches

According to media reports, on 24 December 2021, Iran once again conducted flight tests of 16 ballistic missiles as part of its “Great Prophet 17” military exercise. The exercise featured 12 Missile Technology Control Regime category 1-class missile systems, including eight 700 km-range Zolfaghar short-range ballistic missiles, one 2,000 km-range Sejil medium-range ballistic missile and three variants of the 1,650–2,000 km-range Shahab-3/Ghadr medium-range ballistic missile.



The Zolfaghar short-range ballistic missiles and Shahab-3/Ghadr and Sejil medium-range ballistic missiles meet the Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 criteria above and, as such, are inherently capable of delivering nuclear weapons. We assess that Iran's firing of ballistic missiles described above amounts to ballistic missile activity inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#).

As noted in our letter to the Secretary-General dated 27 March 2019 ([S/2019/270](#)), Iran has indicated that the Zolfaghar has a range of 700 km with a warhead of 579 kg.

In paragraph 36 and 76 of its final report, dated 4 June 2012 ([S/2012/395](#)), the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#) concluded that the Shahab-3 is a nuclear-capable missile. The Emad and Ghadr classes are both modifications of the Shahab-3 to extend its range and accuracy.

Satellite launch vehicle launch

According to media reports, on 30 December 2021, Iran conducted a flight test of its Simorgh satellite launch vehicle that was deemed a success, despite failing to position orbital satellites. The test will have proven the operation of the satellite launch vehicle's propulsion systems, which are based on technologies shared with Iran's ballistic missile programme.

In paragraph 87 of its final report, the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#) noted that "the Panel reached a consensus that both ballistic missile and space launch programmes shared a great deal of similar material and technology, including systems for propulsion, control and navigation". The technologies and trials necessary for the conception, fabrication and launch of a satellite launch vehicle are closely related to those required for the development of a long-range ballistic missile or an intercontinental ballistic missile. Actual launches of satellite launch vehicles provide Iran with empirical results that can be used to optimize capabilities related to the development of such missile systems. It is therefore our assessment that launches of satellite launch vehicles amount to "using such ballistic missile technology" under paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#).

In the light of these elements, France, Germany and the United Kingdom assert once again our firm conviction that the above-mentioned activities are inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). We are particularly concerned that these launches, which follow activities outlined in our letters of November and December 2018, February, March and November 2019, June 2020 and February and August 2021, constitute an enduring trend of Iran continuing to advance its ballistic missile capabilities despite the provisions in resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). We request that the Secretary-General once again report fully and thoroughly in his next report on this resolution.

We would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nicolas **de Rivi re**
Permanent Representative
French Mission

(Signed) Antje **Leendertse**
Permanent Representative
German Mission

(Signed) James **Kariuki**
Charg  d'affaires
United Kingdom Mission