Israel accuses Iran of testing 2 missiles this year, violating UNSC resolution

May 24, 2018

By [Michael Bachner](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/michael-bachner/)

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-accuses-iran-of-testing-2-missiles-this-year-violating-unsc-resolution/>

Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, on Thursday accused Iran of violating a Security Council resolution by conducting in January two previously unreported tests on ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

In a letter to the Security Council, Danon said a variant of the Shahab-3 medium-range missile was tested on January 2 in the region of Chabahar in southeast Iran. Three days later, he said, the country’s military launched a variant of the Scud missile from a firing range 110 kilometers northeast of the city of Kerman.

Danon did not cite any sources for his claims. There don’t seem to have been any reports of such activities by Iran in January. Danon and the Israeli Ministry of Defense did not reply to requests for details.

“Both the Shahab-3 and Scud missiles are Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) category one ballistic missiles, capable of delivering a nuclear payload of 500 kilograms for a range of over 300 kilometers,” Danon wrote. “Iran’s activities, are therefore, in violation of Article 3 of Annex B to Security Council Resolution 2231.”

Iran has conducted dozens of missile tests in recent years in violation of Security Council Resolution 2231, which affirmed the 2015 nuclear deal and called on Iran to refrain from developing missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Iran has maintained that it never intended to develop nuclear weapons and therefore its missile development doesn’t violate the agreement. Diplomats have said the language in the resolution is nonbinding and therefore can’t be enforced with punitive measures.

Danon charged that the alleged tests were part of a series of “Iranian breaches of this resolution this year, including the missiles it fired from Syria into Israel and the armed UAV it launched from Syria into Israeli airspace.”

On February 10, an Iranian drone said to be carrying explosives briefly entered Israeli airspace from Syria before it was shot down. Israel has said the drone was on an attack mission.

Earlier this month Iran [fired](https://www.timesofisrael.com/air-force-chief-iranians-fired-32-rockets-at-golan-on-may-10/) a volley of dozens of rockets from Syrian territory at Israel. Most fell in Syrian territory, and several were shot down by Israeli missile defense systems. Israel retaliated with widespread airstrikes against Iranian positions, also blasting Syrian air defense targets which had opened fire at the planes.

“Iran continues to ignore its obligations to the international community and further destabilize the Middle East, particularly in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and the Gaza Strip,” Danon concluded. “Its activities pose a direct threat to Israel and the entire region. The Security Council must remain vigilant in the face of Iranian aggression.”

The 2015 nuclear deal saw heavy sanctions lifted on Iran in return for Tehran freezing much of its nuclear program. Having pulled out of the deal in May, the US has vowed to apply the “[strongest sanctions in history](https://www.timesofisrael.com/pompeo-vows-strongest-sanctions-in-history-against-iran/)” on Iran.

The New York Times [reported Wednesday](https://www.timesofisrael.com/evidence-points-to-iranian-work-on-long-range-missiles-at-secret-base-report/) that weapons researchers have identified activity at a remote secret Iranian facility that points to the covert development of long-range missiles that could potentially be used to attack the United States.

Satellite images appear to show, among other things, activity around a tunnel leading underground and evidence of powerful rocket engine tests that scorched telltale marks in the desert sand near the city of Shahrud, [the report said.](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/world/middleeast/iran-missiles.html)

According to the report, researchers from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey watched a recent Iranian documentary about rocket scientist Gen. Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, a leading figure in the country’s missile development program, who was killed in a devastating 2011 explosion at Iran’s main research facility near the town of Bidganeh. Based on details in the film, the researchers came to the conclusion that before his death Moghaddam had helped set up another facility, which is still operational.

The Shahrud site, located about 350 kilometers (220 miles) east of Tehran, was used for a missile test firing in 2013 and was thought to have remained largely unused since. However, the satellite images led researchers to the conclusion that the site was working on advanced rocket motors and rocket fuel.

The US and its allies have been demanding that Iran curb its production of ballistic missiles, which can reach parts of Europe and could soon reach the US as well. Western officials have maintained that the only reason Tehran could have for manufacturing such missiles would be to fit them with non-conventional, including atomic, warheads.

Tehran insists that it sees the missile program as crucial to its defensive posture, and says its existence is nonnegotiable.

Iranian leaders have also said they are not working on missiles with a range beyond the Middle East. It has so far produced a missile with a range of 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles), putting all of Israel in range as well as much of Eastern Europe.