



## Security Council

Distr.: General  
8 June 2020

Original: English

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### **Letter dated 8 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

I am writing to you with reference to a letter dated 3 June 2020 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 (S/2020/400).

In order to establish a link between the launch of a space launch vehicle by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the provisions of paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), the authors of the aforesaid letter have, once again, invoked the definitions of the Missile Technology Control Regime, including through portraying them as the universally agreed definition. It is to be reminded that there is no implicit or explicit reference in that paragraph either to the Missile Technology Control Regime itself or to its definitions. Therefore, any reference thereto is totally inaccurate and misleading.

Moreover, the Missile Technology Control Regime is an exclusive “informal political understanding” among only 35 States and its criteria are not legally binding, even for its members. Accordingly, any attempt to portray them as the universally agreed definition is clearly unprofessional, deceptive and suspicious. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/229), “there is no universally accepted norm or instrument specifically governing the development, testing, production, acquisition, transfer, deployment or use of missiles”. This fact has also been acknowledged by the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in her remarks on 22 August 2019 before the Security Council, when she stated that “there remains no universal norm, treaty or agreement regulating missiles” (see [S/PV.8602](#)).

In the recent past, the authors of the aforementioned letter have systematically attempted, including through invoking the definitions of the Missile Technology Control Regime, making reference to such unreliable sources as social media, citing terminated Security Council resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#) or outdated reports, even in completely different contexts, disseminating technical disinformation – like what has been done in the aforesaid letter – and similar methods, to link the launch by the Islamic Republic of Iran of space launch vehicles to paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), in order to make an arbitrary interpretation thereof and, consequently, to draw an arbitrary conclusion with regard to the implementation of that paragraph and the resolution itself.

Contrary to the claims made in the above-mentioned letter, paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), which calls upon Iran “not to undertake any



activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology”, does not concern the space launch vehicles for a number of reasons: firstly, there is no explicit reference to “space launch vehicles” therein; secondly, space launch vehicles do not incorporate technologies identical to “ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”; thirdly, space launch vehicles, which are exclusively designed to place satellites into orbit, are not “designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”; and fourthly, space launch vehicles are not capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Likewise, contrary to the arguments made in that letter, the launch of space launch vehicles by Iran is, in no way, covered by, or inconsistent with, paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). Space launch vehicles are not “ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”; do not use technologies identical to “ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”; and are not capable of delivering nuclear weapons. It is also worth recalling that, when the launch of a space launch vehicle by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2017 was discussed in the Security Council, “there was no consensus on how this particular launch related to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#)” (see [S/2017/1058](#)).

Furthermore, in an arbitrary interpretation of the phrase “designed to be capable” in paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), the negotiating history and the *raison d’être* of that phrase have deliberately been disregarded. The addition of the phrase “designed to be” to the wording “capable of delivering nuclear weapons” used in the already terminated Security Council resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#) was a deliberate modification following lengthy negotiations in order to exclude Iran’s defensive missile programme that is “designed” to be exclusively capable of delivering conventional warheads. Accordingly, the missile programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran falls outside the purview or competence of the Security Council resolution and its annexes (see [S/2015/550](#)), as does its space programme, including the launch of space launch vehicles.

The authors, by citing the name of certain places in Iran, referring to the launch of the space launch vehicle by Iran from a “mobile launch pad”, as well as mentioning the name of the organization involved in the development and launch of the space launch vehicle concerned, have also made an unsuccessful attempt to make their own arbitrary conclusions and consequently accuse Iran of conducting activities inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#). Instead of such unprofessional, provocative and irresponsible conduct, as well as raising politically motivated baseless allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to the implementation of Security Council resolutions [2231 \(2015\)](#), [2216 \(2015\)](#) and [1540 \(2004\)](#), all of which are hereby categorically rejected, the authors must explain why their respective States continue to export large quantities of the most sophisticated weaponries to our region, to be used by their staunch regional allies to kill innocent people, including children and women, in regional conflicts.

While re-emphasizing that Iran has not conducted any activity inconsistent with resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), I would like to stress once again that Iran is determined to resolutely continue its activities related to ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles, both of which are within its inherent rights under international law and are necessary for preserving its security as well as socioeconomic interests.

In this context, we warn against the politically motivated approach by certain developed countries with space programmes, who, under absurd pretexts like proliferation concerns, attempt to demonize the use of space technology for peaceful purposes by developing countries. This hypocritical approach seriously runs the risk of endangering the exercise of the inherent right of States to access space and celestial

bodies, their freedom in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, as well as their free access to space science, technologies and their applications without discrimination of any kind.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, like any other State, enjoys the right to the peaceful use of outer space, and its space programme comprises scientific and technological activities related to the peaceful uses of outer space in such areas as disaster management, environmental monitoring and natural resource management, communication, human health, food security and sustainable agriculture, which are common features and requirements of the socioeconomic development of every society. Accordingly, the launch of the space launch vehicle concerned by Iran is in full conformity with international law, as well as Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* **Majid Takht Ravanchi**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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