



## Security Council

Distr.: General  
4 March 2021

Original: English

---

### **Letter dated 4 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I am writing to you with reference to a letter dated 18 February 2021 from the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2021/163).

As in the past, the authors, by invoking the non-consensual and non-universally agreed definitions of the Missile Technology Control Regime, citing terminated Security Council resolution [1929 \(2010\)](#) and relevant outdated reports, even in completely different contexts, disseminating technical disinformation, and similar methods, have attempted to establish a possible link between paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the launches by the Islamic Republic of Iran of certain ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles, 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.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has stated time and again that its missile and space programmes, including the launches of ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles, fall outside the purview or competence of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and its annexes.

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”, is crystal clear and needs no interpretation.

The Security Council must bear in mind the exact provisions and the context of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), including the negotiating history and particularly the *raison d’être* of the inclusion of the phrase “designed to be capable” in paragraph 3 of annex B to that resolution, as well as the subsequent practice of the Council itself in dealing with the implementation of that paragraph.

With respect to the provisions and the context of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), it must be recalled that in the very first paragraph of the preface and paragraph iii of the preamble and general provisions of annex A to that resolution, “Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons”. This principled position of Iran has been welcomed by the Council in resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#).



Additionally, in its statement issued following the adoption of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), the Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejected weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and reiterated the sublime Islamic teachings as well as the relevant views and practices of the late founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, and the historic fatwa of the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, declaring that “it has always been the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to prohibit the acquisition, production, stockpiling or use of nuclear weapons” ([S/2015/550](#)). This assertion remains valid.

On the negotiating history of resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), particularly the inclusion in paragraph 3 of annex B thereto of the phrase “designed to be capable”, it must be underlined that 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. This substantive point can, in no way, be disregarded.

With regard to the subsequent practice of the Council in dealing with the implementation of paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#), it is also worth recalling that when, on numerous occasions, the launches by Iran of ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles have been discussed during Security Council consultations in the past several years, “no consensus was reached among Council members as to whether these Iranian launches were covered by resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#)” ([S/2016/589](#), [S/2016/649](#), [S/2017/515](#), [S/2017/537](#), [S/2017/1030](#), [S/2017/1058](#), [S/2019/492](#), [S/2019/934](#) and [S/2020/531](#)).

In order to establish a possible link between the provisions of paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#) and the launches by Iran of ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles, the authors of the aforesaid letter have, once again, invoked the definitions of the Missile Technology Control Regime, including by portraying them as the universally agreed definition. It is to be recalled 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” ([S/PV.8602](#)).

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.

The authors, by stating that certain Iranian space launch vehicles “can be launched from mobile launchers” or use “solid-propellant motors” as well as mentioning the name of the organization involved in the development and launches of the space launch vehicles concerned, have not only attempted to deceptively cast doubt on the peaceful nature of Iran’s space programme, but also to draw 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 resolution 2231 (2015), the respective Governments of the authors must comply, fully and genuinely, with all their respective legal obligations under that resolution, including refraining from any actions that undermine the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), particularly its annex A.

In light of the above, while categorically rejecting all unsubstantiated allegations made in the aforesaid letter and reemphasizing 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.

We also warn against the politically motivated approach taken 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.

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