Iran Says It Will Not Accept Any Restrictions on Missile Programme

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Iran will not accept any restrictions on its missile programme, the defence minister was quoted as saying by state media on Wednesday, after sanctions monitors said Tehran had violated a U.N. Security Council resolution by test-firing a missile.

The Security Council's Panel of Experts on Iran said in a confidential report, first reported by Reuters, the medium-range Emad rocket, tested in October, met its requirements for considering that a missile could deliver a nuclear weapon.

"We tested Emad to show the world that the Islamic Republic will only act based on its national interests and no country or power can impose its will on us," Defence Minister Hossein Dehghan was quoted as saying by the state news agency, IRNA.

Ballistic missile tests by Iran are banned under Security Council resolution 1929, which dates from 2010 and remains valid until the July nuclear deal between Iran and world powers goes into effect.

Once the deal takes effect, Iran will still be "called upon" not to undertake any ballistic missiles work designed to deliver nuclear weapons for a period of up to eight years, according to a Security Council resolution adopted in July right after the nuclear deal.

Iran says the resolution would only ban missiles "designed" to carry a nuclear warhead, not "capable of", so it would not affect its military programme as Tehran does not pursues nuclear weapons.

Iran's defence minister called Emad a "conventional missile" reiterating that the army would not accept "any restrictions on its missile programme".

"Since the nuclear deal we have not stopped our (missile)tests, production and research even for a day, an hour or a second," he added.

While ballistic missile tests may violate U.N. Security Council sanctions, some diplomats note that such launches are not a violation of the nuclear deal.

Iran has one of the largest missile programmes in the Middle East.