

UN proves Houthi missiles found in Yemen were made in Iran



A handout picture made available by the Iranian Army office reportedly shows a Sayad missile fired from the Talash missile system during an air defence drill at an undisclosed location in Iran on November 5, 2018. (File/AFP)

- Iran has pressed on with its ballistic missile programme after reining in much of its nuclear programme under a 2015 deal with major powers
- Iran has developed several types of ballistic missiles with a range of up to 3,000 kilometres

JEDDAH: Two launch units for anti-tank guided missiles recovered by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen were manufactured in Iran, according to a confidential report to be discussed by the UN Security Council on Wednesday.

“The Secretariat found that they had characteristics of Iranian manufacture and that their markings indicated production dates in 2016 and 2017,” UN Secretary-General Antonio said in his biannual report to the Security Council on the implementation of sanctions on Iran.

“The Secretariat also examined a partly disassembled surface-to-air missile seized by the Saudi-led coalition and observed that its features appeared to be consistent with those of an Iranian missile,” Guterres said.

A UN resolution that took effect in January 2016 prevents Iran from importing or exporting arms or related military material without explicit approval from the Security Council.

Guterres also said the UN had examined the debris of three ballistic missiles fired at Saudi Arabia on March 25 and April 11, 2018, and found “specific key design features consistent with those of the Iranian Qiam-1 short-range ballistic missile.”

He said the UN was “still working on establishing the production date range of guidance subcomponents with the assistance of the foreign manufacturers.”

In his June report, Guterres said debris from five missiles fired at Saudi Arabia by the Houthis since July 2017 “share key design features with a known type of missile” manufactured by Iran and some components were manufactured in Iran.

Saudi Arabia has consistently argued that, despite denials from Tehran, Iran supplies arms and ammunition to the Houthi militias in Yemen, including parts for ballistic missiles that target Saudi cities. The UN report is further evidence to support the Saudi argument.

The US has unsuccessfully tried to persuade the UN to hold Iran accountable for meddling in the wars in Syria and Yemen and elsewhere in the Middle East. In February Russia vetoed a Western attempt to have the Security Council criticize Tehran in a resolution on Yemen.

Iranian weapons are smuggled into Yemen through the port of Hodeidah, a key sticking point in UN-brokered talks on Yemen taking place for the past week in Sweden.

The UN proposed on Tuesday that both sides in the conflict withdraw from Hodeidah and place it under the control of an interim entity.

The two sides also exchanged lists of about 15,000 prisoners for a swap. The exchange will take place via Houthi-held Sanaa airport in the north and government-held Sayun airport in the south, overseen by the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

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