

UK Sanctions Iran over kamikaze Russian drones

- UK measures target Russian drone supplies used to attack civilian targets and critical infrastructure in Ukraine
- Today's sanctions target Iranians responsible for supplying Russia with kamikaze drones
- Procurement is further evidence of Iran's destabilising role in global security and a clear violation of a UN Security Council Resolution

The UK is today (October 20) implementing new sanctions on Iranian individuals and business responsible for supplying Russia with kamikaze drones used to bombard Ukraine.

Russia is using the drones to attack both civilian targets and critical infrastructure in Kyiv and across Ukraine, with the intention of cutting off Ukrainian people from energy, heating, and water.

By supplying these drones Iran is actively warmongering, profiting off Russia's abhorrent attacks on Ukrainian citizens, and adding to the suffering of the people and the destruction of critical infrastructure. Both Russia and Iran are violating a UN Security Council Resolution that controls the transfer of these weapons from Iran.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

Iran's support for Putin's brutal and illegal war against Ukraine is deplorable. Today we are sanctioning those who have supplied the drones used by Russia to target Ukrainian civilians. This is clear evidence of Iran's destabilising role in global security.

These cowardly drone strikes are an act of desperation. By enabling these strikes, these individuals and a manufacturer have caused the people of Ukraine untold suffering. We will ensure that they are held to account for their actions.

Today's sanctions target the individuals and business personally responsible for providing the drones that have been used in these barbaric strikes. They are:

- Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri – the Chairman of the armed forces General Staff who has overseen the army branches supplying Russia with drones. Bagheri is subject to an asset freeze and travel ban
- Brigadier General Seyed Hojjatollah Qureishi – the key Iranian negotiator in the deal that has provided Russia with the Iranian produced drones. Qureishi is subject to an asset freeze and travel ban
- Brigadier General Saeed Aghajani – the head of the Iranian Revolutionary

Guard Corps (IRGC), a branch of the Iranian armed forces, Aerospace Force UAV Command – the IRGC are reported to have been in the temporarily controlled territories of Ukraine advising Russian forces on how to use the drones. Aghajani is subject to an asset freeze and travel ban.

- Shahed Aviation Industries – the Iranian manufacturer of the Shahed drones which have been used by Russia during its illegal invasion of Ukraine. Shahed Aviation Industries is subject to an asset freeze.

Procuring these weapons shows Russia is turning to countries such as Iran out of desperation in order to continue fighting their illegal war.

Open-source evidence has shown Russia's own defence company and drone producer Kronshtadt struggle to maintain production since they were sanctioned (24 March 2022), with fridges and dishwashers being cannibalised in order to create military equipment, and Soviet-era tanks have also been sent to the front line as they strain to maintain their military equipment.

Background

The UK has previously designated close to 300 Iranian individuals and entities for their role in weapons proliferation, human rights abuses, and terrorism. These include those involved in Iran's drone programme, including Iran's Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Logistics and the Iran Aviation Industries Organisation and its subsidiaries including Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Company and Qods Aviation Industry and individuals including Amir Hajizadeh, the IRGC Aerospace Force Commander.

Iran has one of the largest and most diverse drone and missile arsenals in the Middle East and continues to increase the sophistication, range and accuracy of its weapons systems. It also has a long-standing track record of proliferating drones, missiles and missile technology, including to non-state actors. The missiles and drones are under the control of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iran's and Russia's action violates UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which provides that the transfer from, or to, Iran of specified items require prior approval from the Security Council.

In response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the UK and our international partners have implemented the most severe package of sanctions ever imposed on a major economy. The UK has sanctioned over 1,200 individuals and 120 entities since the start of the invasion as well as introducing unprecedented trade measures.

Asset freeze

An asset freeze prevents any UK citizen, or any business in the UK, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person. UK financial sanctions apply to all persons within the territory and territorial sea of the UK and to all UK persons, wherever they are in the world. It also prevents funds or economic

resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.

Travel ban

A travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual is an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.

Transport sanctions

Recently introduced powers make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK and give the government powers to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register, even if the sanctioned individual is not on board. Russian ships are also banned from UK ports.