

Iran unveils drones armed with air-to-air missiles



The indigenous Karrar drones were unveiled in a ceremony and added to the drone fleet of the Iranian Army on December 10, 2023.

● IRNA

National Desk

In what it considers a significant shift in technological power in the region, Iran has unveiled new combat drones with air-to-air missile capabilities.

"Dozens of Karrar drones, armed with air-to-air missiles, have been added for air defense in all border areas of the country," the official IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

The drones, with an operational range of up to 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), were exhibited on Sunday morning during a televised ceremony organized at a military academy in Tehran, AFP reported.

"The enemies will now have to rethink their strategies" because the Iranian forces have "become more powerful and will have the upper hand in aerial battles," IRNA quoted the Commander-in-Chief of Iran's Army Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi as saying.

The Karrar interceptor drone, the first version of which was unveiled in 2010, has been equipped with a Majid thermal missile, with a range of eight kilometers (five miles).

"We have been feeling the need to produce a drone that is made entirely in Iran, isn't expensive to produce, and can carry out our operations."

Karrar drones "succeeded in their operational tests" during military exercises held in October, Mousavi said. The first batch of the drones were supplied to the army for use last month, the commander pointed out.

The development of Iran's military arsenal has sparked concern among many countries, particularly the United States and Israel, the sworn enemies of the Islamic Republic.

The latter accuse Tehran of providing fleets of drones to its allies in the Middle East, notably to the Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah, and to the Houthi group in Yemen.

Tehran has been accused by Kyiv and its Western allies of providing Russia with drones for use in the Ukraine war, a claim Tehran vehemently denies.

Western governments, however, imposed several rounds of biting sanctions on Iran over the alleged arms sales. Iran began manufacturing drones in the 1980s during its eight-year war with Iraq.

PA: Victory requires unity among Palestinians

UN chief last to lose hope on UNSC

Gazans stripped of dignity on 'hell on earth': UNRWA

International Desk

After the US wielded its veto at the United Nations Security Council to block a move to call for a cease-fire in Gaza on Friday, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the council is "paralyzed by geostrategic divisions".

The event left the UN without a clear route map to stop the conflict lasting many months, but the chief vowed he would not give up seeking a cease-fire in Gaza, according to the Guardian.

Speaking at the Doha Forum in Qatar, Guterres did not directly criticize the US in his address but said world institutions "are weak and outdated, caught in a time warp reflecting a reality of 80 years ago".

Guterres spelled out why he had employed Article

99 of the UN Charter to use his extraordinary powers to force the Security Council to address the crisis in Gaza. "I urged the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, and I reiterated my appeal for a humanitarian cease-fire to be declared."

"Regrettably, the Security Council failed to do it, but that does not make it less necessary," he said. "I will not give up."

Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister, also said he was not giving up on the negotiations to secure the release of Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners, the precondition that Israel and the US have set for a cease-fire.

He said the previous willingness to negotiate does not currently exist and

urged both sides of the conflict to trust the process. The continuation of the Israeli bombardment, he noted, is narrowing the window, endangering the lives of Palestinian political prisoners, and putting the captives at risk.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said Israel should be put under sanctions and complained that the International Criminal Court had been dragging its feet in looking at the question of the Israeli occupation.

He was reluctant to discuss solutions such as how Gaza might be administered at the end of the conflict but said Palestinians were under a duty to build a united front. "Today we have no excuse whatsoever to be divided. It is a must that if we are to win, we must not be divided."



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres speaks during a UN Security Council meeting about his invoking Article 99 of the UN charter to address the humanitarian crisis in the midst of the Israeli military campaign against Gaza at the UN headquarters in New York City, US, on December 8, 2023.

● REUTERS

But at further side meetings in the Doha Forum, there were calls to move beyond the existing Palestinian Authority leadership, saying it had lost all credibility. Young Palestinians were less interested in two-state solutions than their rights, the forum heard.

Philippe Lazzarani, commissioner general of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said: "There is no doubt a cease-fire is needed if we are to bring an end to hell on earth."

He said UNRWA is on the edge of collapse, and if it does collapse, it would be felt as an ultimate betrayal by the international community of the Palestinian people. He said the Palestinian people feel "stripped of dignity, humiliated, and psychologically broken".

In a post on his official social media account on Sunday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said the United States, by vetoing the Gaza cease-fire resolution, once again demonstrated its role as "the main supporter of the massacre of innocent women and children in Gaza".

Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday slammed the UN Security Council, describing the UN leadership as the "Israel protection council". Erdogan also accused the West of "barbarism" and Islamophobia for the war in Gaza, Fox News reported.

Emboldened US supplies ammo

Going around Congress, the Biden administration said Saturday it has approved the emergency sale to Israel of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition worth more than \$106 million as Israel intensifies its military operations in the southern Gaza Strip.

The move comes as President Biden's request for a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel, and other national security issues is languishing in Congress, caught up in a debate over US immigration policy and border security, CBS News wrote. The purchase will bypass the congressional review requirement for foreign military sales. Such determinations are rare but not unprecedented. The sale is worth \$106.5 million and includes

13,981 120-mm High Explosive Anti-Tank Multi-Purpose with Tracer tank cartridges as well as US support, engineering, and logistics. The material will come from the Army's inventory.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu thanked the US president for his administration's vetoing of the UNSC resolution urging a cease-fire and for its approval of an urgent shipment of some 14,000 tank shells he says were due to start arriving Sunday. Meanwhile, the war between Israel and Hamas is having a catastrophic impact on health in Gaza, the WHO chief warned Sunday, with medics facing an "impossible" job in unimaginable conditions.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a special session of the World Health Organization's executive board that the Palestinian territory's health system was in free fall, according to AFP.

"As more and more people move to a smaller and smaller area, overcrowding, combined with the lack of adequate food, water, shelter, and sanitation, is creating the ideal conditions for disease to spread," he said.

The UN health agency's

chief said there were worrying signs of epidemic diseases — and the risk was expected to worsen with the situation deteriorating and winter conditions approaching.

"Gaza's health system is on its knees and collapsing," Tedros said, with only 14 out of 36 hospitals functioning with any capacity at all and only two of those in the north of the coastal territory. Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas after the group's unprecedented attacks on October 7, when its fighters broke through Gaza's militarized border, killed about 1,200 people, and took captives, according to Israeli officials.

In response, Israel's military offensive in Gaza has killed at least 17,700 people, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Heavy fighting raged Sunday across Gaza, including in the devastated north, where entire neighborhoods have been flattened by air strikes and where ground troops have been operating for over six weeks.

The AP reported that about 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced within the besieged territory, where UN agencies say there is no safe place to flee. Israel's Channel 13 TV broadcast footage showing dozens of detainees stripped to their underwear with their hands in the air. Detainees from a separate group who were released Saturday told The Associated Press they had been beaten and denied food and water.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Turkey's president says the UNSC should change its name to 'Israeli Protection Council' after the US veto.

Cartoonist signature