Nikki Haley slams UN Security Council for inaction on Iran

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By Reuters

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US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley slammed the Security Council on Thursday for failing to take any action against Iran, which she said had "repeatedly and deliberately violated" sanctions imposed by the body.

"The Security Council has failed to even take minimal steps to respond to these violations," Haley told a council briefing on Iran. "We must ... show Iran that we will not tolerate their egregious flaunting of UN resolutions."

Most UN sanctions were lifted 18 months ago under a deal Iran made with key world powers to curb its nuclear program. But Iran is still subject to an arms embargo and other restrictions, which are not technically part of the nuclear agreement.

UN political affairs chief Jeffrey Feltman briefed the council on Thursday on Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' third six-monthly report on the implementation of the remaining sanctions and restrictions, enshrined in resolution 2231.

"The secretary-general's report makes clear that Iran is in violation of the Security Council resolution 2231 and so the question becomes 'what is the Security Council going to do about it?'" Haley said.

No council members have proposed taking any action against Iran. Diplomats say veto-powers Russia and China were unlikely to agree to more measures. Russia on Thursday questioned some of the findings of Guterres' report.

Feltman told the council that in relation to a weapons seizure by the French Navy in the northern Indian Ocean in March 2016, the United Nations was "confident that the weapons seized are of Iranian origin and were shipped from Iran."

The report also looked at Iran's Jan. 29 launch of a ballistic missile and noted there was no consensus within the Security Council on how the launch related to resolution 2231.

"I call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to avoid such ballistic missile launches, which have the potential to increase tensions," Guterres said in the report.

A year ago Guterres' predecessor Ban Ki-moon described ballistic missile launches by Iran as "not consistent with the constructive spirit" of the nuclear deal.

Under the UN resolution, Iran is "called upon" to refrain from work on ballistic missiles designed to deliver nuclear weapons for up to eight years. Some states argue that language does not make it obligatory.

US President Donald Trump's administration is reviewing the nuclear deal - agreed to under President Barack Obama - and Haley said that "until that review is completed we will comply with our commitments and we expect Iran to do the same."