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ATTACK HITS IRAN'S SHAHED-136 DRONE MANUFACTURING

Facility, According to Reports

Steve Balestrieri (<https://www.sandboxx.us/blog/author/steve-balestrieri/>) | January 30, 2023

Iran was rocked by several explosions on Saturday night as an advanced weapons facility in Isfahan, 270 miles south of Tehran, was hit by a drone attack.

"An explosion has occurred in one of the military centers affiliated to the Ministry of Defense," Mohammad Reza Jan-Nesari, the deputy chief of security for the Isfahan governate, told (<https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/28/middleeast/drones-attack-iran-military-plant-intl-hnk/index.html#:~:text=Drones%20attacked%20a%20military%20plant,semi%20official%20Fars%20News%20Agency.>) the Fars News Agency. The attack caused some damage but no casualties according to Jan-Nesari.

Local officials told (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-64445306>) the government-controlled IRNA news agency that the building was a "workshop" although IRNA announced that the attack, which took place at 11:30 p.m. local time, had targeted "an ammunition manufacturing plant."

According to Israeli news media, the facility manufactured the Shahed-136 drones that Iran has been selling to Russia to use against Ukraine (<https://www.sandboxx.us/blog/is-russia-admitting-that-its-defense-industry-cant-keep-up-by-using-iranian-shahed-136-drones/>); the Russians are supposedly running low on the drones (<https://www.newsweek.com/russia-ukraine-iranian-shahed-136-drones-institute-study-war-volodymyr-zelensky-1772102>).





Purportedly part of a Shahed-136 drone that was shot down near the town of Kupiansk, Ukraine. ([The Strategic Communications Directorate of the Ukrainian Armed Forces](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/156965626164117696) (<https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/156965626164117696>))

Iran's defense ministry said that it foiled the attack on the weapons facility by shooting down one small drone and catching two others in defense nets.

"This cowardly act was carried out today as part of the efforts made by enemies of the Iranian nation in recent months to make the Islamic Republic insecure," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Sunday at a press conference.

"Such measures cannot affect the will and intention of our specialists for peaceful nuclear developments," he added.

However, the Jerusalem Post (<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-729959>) and the Wall Street Journal wrote that the drone strikes were successful with Wall Street Journal writing that Israel and Mossad carried out the strikes, citing U.S. officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The drones were large and contained a large number of explosives, according to Jerusalem Post. A mobile phone video recorded the drone as it hit the building, sending up an explosion and a shower of sparks.

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Pentagon spokesperson Brigadier General Patrick Ryder said the U.S. military had no part in the drone strikes but declined to elaborate further and Israel has not confirmed or denied any involvement in the drone strikes.

Mossad has been linked to other operations inside of Iran. In 2020 Iran claimed that Israel was behind the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55128970>), one of its top nuclear scientists who was heavily involved in their nuclear weapons program. Mossad was alleged to have also been behind the sabotaging of two key nuclear facilities outside the city of Natanz and a third in the city of Karaj in 2020 and 2021.

In a separate incident on Saturday, a large fire broke out at an oil facility near the Iranian city of Tabriz, the IRNA news reported. No details of the cause of the blaze have been reported.

In related news, a convoy of 25 Iranian trucks entering Syria (https://www.timesofisrael.com/warplanes-said-to-strike-convoy-of-iranian-militia-trucks-on-syria-iraq-border/?utm_source=article_hpsidebar&utm_medium=desktop_site) from Iraq was attacked over the weekend by unknown aircraft at a border crossing run by Iranian-proxy militias. The aircraft also targeted a group of Iranian commanders who were meeting nearby.

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A fire is seen burning, purportedly at the al-Qaim crossing on the Syria-Iraq border, in unverified footage posted online, January 29, 2023. ([The Times of Israel](https://www.timesofisrael.com/warplanes-said-to-strike-convoy-of-iranian-militia-trucks-on-syria-iraq-border/) (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/warplanes-said-to-strike-convoy-of-iranian-militia-trucks-on-syria-iraq-border/>) via Twitter)

The incidents come after last week, the U.S. and Israel conducted joint exercises geared toward showing Iran that the U.S. was not distracted by the war in Ukraine. CIA Director William Burns was also recently in Israel for a meeting with his Mossad counterpart.

Israel has made it clear that unless the U.S. can secure a deal with Iran similar to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-israel-carried-out-drone-attack-on-iranian-defense-facility/>) (JCPOA) to stop its nuclear weapons program, it will take unilateral action to do so.

Prime Minister Netanyahu considers nuclear weapons in the hands of Tehran an existential threat. Under President Trump, the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018.

Feature Image: Screenshot of the explosion at the Iranian weapons facility. (Yeni Safak (<https://twitter.com/yenisafakEN>) Twitter)

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Steve Balestrieri

Steve Balestrieri is a proven military analyst. He served as a US Army Special Forces NCO and Warrant Officer in the 7th Special Forces Group (<https://www.soc.mil/USASFC/Groups/7th/7thSFGHomepage.html>). In addition to writing for Sandboxx.com (<https://www.sandboxx.us/>), he has written for 19fortyfive.com (<https://www.19fortyfive.com/>) and SOFREP.com (<https://sofrep.com/>); he has covered the NFL for PatsFans.com (<https://www.patsfans.com/>) for over 11 years. His work was regularly featured in the Millbury-Sutton Chronicle and Grafton News newspapers in Massachusetts.

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