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## Iran vows to use 'roaring missiles' if threatened and defies new sanctions

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A Revolutionary Guards commander said Iran would use its missiles if its security is under threat, as the elite force defied new US sanctions on its missile programme by holding a military exercise on Saturday.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have risen since a recent Iranian ballistic missile test that prompted US President Donald Trump's administration to impose sanctions on individuals and entities linked to the Revolutionary Guards.

Mr Trump's national security adviser, Michael Flynn, said that Washington was putting Iran on notice over its "destabilising activity", and Mr Trump tweeted that Tehran was "playing with fire".

"We are working day and night to protect Iran's security," Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, head of Revolutionary Guards' aerospace unit, was quoted as saying by Tasnim news agency.

"If we see the smallest misstep from the enemies, our roaring missiles will fall on their heads," he added.

Despite the heated words, US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis said on Saturday that he was not considering raising the number of US forces in the Middle East to address Iran's "misbehavior", but warned that the world would not ignore Iranian activities.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards is holding the military exercise in Semnan Province on Saturday to test missile and radar systems and to "showcase the power of Iran's revolution and to dismiss the sanctions," according to the force's website.

Dismissing Mr Trump's comments that "nothing is off the table" in dealing with Tehran, the commander of Iran's ground forces said on Saturday that the Islamic Republic has been hearing such threats since its 1979 revolution.

### **Iran nuclear talks**

"The defence capability and the offensive prowess of Iran's armed forces would make America or any other enemy regretful of any incursion," Ahmad Reza Pourdastan, deputy commander-in-chief of the Iranian army, was quoted as saying by ISNA.

Iranian state news agencies reported that home-made missile systems, radars, command and control centres, and cyber warfare systems would be tested in Saturday's drill.

Iran has one of the Middle East's largest missile programmes and held a similar exercise in December to showcase its defence systems, including radars, anti-missile defence units, and short and medium-range missiles.

Tehran confirmed on Wednesday that it had test-fired a new ballistic missile, but said the test did not breach the Islamic Republic's nuclear agreement with world powers or a UN Security Council resolution endorsing the pact.