

# *Washington imposes sanctions on Iranian space agencies*

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Washington, September 4 (RHC)-- The United States has imposed sanctions on Iran's civilian space agency and two research organizations Tuesday, claiming they were being used to advance Tehran's ballistic missile program.

"The United States will not allow Iran to use its space launch program as a cover to advance its ballistic missile programs," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement. He said Iran's August 29th attempt to test a space launch vehicle underscored "the urgency of the threat."

An Iranian rocket exploded on its launch pad at Imam Khomeini Space Center in northern Iran before its scheduled launch last Thursday. The explosion followed Iran's failed attempt to launch a satellite in January.

The sanctions are the first imposed on Iran's space agencies, according to the State Department.

Iran, which considers its space program a matter of national pride, has said its space vehicle launches and missile tests do not flout U.N. resolutions and will continue. Iran has repeatedly denied any intent to develop nuclear weapons and curbed its disputed uranium enrichment program under a 2015 deal with world powers.

The U.S. move against Iran comes as Washington announced on August 2nd that it has abandoned the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) signed with Russia, claiming that Moscow refused to destroy the Novator 9M729, a cruise missile that has a range of 311 miles, which violate the agreement's terms.

Behind those arguments lacking evidence, other circumstances and intentions have been hidden, among which is the interest of the U.S. to control China's military growth, as they have invited the Asian nation to "a new era" of arms control.

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