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U.S. Accuses Iran of Sending Ballistic Missiles to Russia

By AFP

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A man walks past a banner with images of Iranian missiles in Tehran. **Abedin Taherkenareh / EPA / TASS**

Iran sent short-range missiles to Russia that are expected to be used against Ukraine within weeks, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday as he announced a joint solidarity trip to Kyiv with his British counterpart.

Blinken, who was visiting London, said Washington and its allies would impose new sanctions on Iran for defying warnings on sending the missiles, including restrictions on the state-owned carrier Iran Air.

He said that dozens of Russian military personnel have trained in Iran using the Fath-360 missile, which has a range of 75 miles (120 kilometers).

"We've warned Iran privately that taking this step would constitute a dramatic escalation,"

Blinken said at a news conference in London. "Russia has now received shipments of these ballistic missiles and will likely use them within weeks in Ukraine against Ukrainians."

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"Iran's new president and foreign minister have repeatedly said that they want to restore engagement with Europe. They want to receive sanctions relief. Destabilizing actions like these will achieve exactly the opposite," he added.

Germany, France and Britain said shortly after on Tuesday that they would impose new sanctions on Tehran over the missile transfers.

"We will be taking immediate steps to cancel bilateral air services agreements with Iran," the countries said in a joint statement, adding that they would also "work towards imposing sanctions on Iran Air."

"In addition, we will pursue the designations of significant entities and individuals involved with Iran's ballistic missile program and the transfer of ballistic missiles and other weapons to Russia," the statement continued.

Blinken and U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy said they would travel together "this week" to Ukraine, in the first such joint trip in recent years. "We are the closest of allies, so I'm delighted that we will travel together, demonstrating our commitment to Ukraine," Lammy said.

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