

Russia to sell anti-aircraft weapons to Iran, Syria

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According to an AFP report, controversial Russian contracts to sell anti-aircraft weapons to Syria and Iran are being fulfilled on schedule Russian officials said.

At least half of the 29 Tor-M1 missile systems bought by Iran for \$1.4 bln (€1.06 bln) had been delivered, state-run ITAR-TASS quoted an unnamed source at the defence ministry as saying Tuesday.

"We are actively carrying out deliveries of the system to Iran. At least 50% of the contract has been delivered," the official was quoted as saying.

The air defence systems are being stationed around Iran's civilian nuclear sites, according to ITAR-TASS.

The United States, which is leading international pressure against Iran's nuclear programme, strongly resisted the contract and imposed sanctions against Russian jetmaker Sukhoi and arms exporter Rosoboronexport.

Meanwhile, Interfax news agency quoted Valery Kashin, head of weapons maker Engineering Design Bureau, as saying that Russia met all its commitments in 2006 under the contract to supply Syria with the Strelets anti-aircraft system. He gave no details.

Israel spoke out against the 2005 deal, claiming that Syria would pass on the system, which fires Igla ground-to-air rockets, to Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

Details about the quantity and cost of the Strelets contract have not been made public.

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