



## Iran: Mohajer-6 UAV Strikes Targets in Iraq

**OE Watch Commentary:** Iran’s indigenous military industry is a source of pride for the Islamic Republic, but frequent announcements about new platforms and capabilities are often exaggerated. As sanctions and international isolation continue to constrain Iran’s economy, the Islamic Republic has prioritized its drone fleet as a relatively cheap means to project power regionally and shown that many of the advances announced for its drone fleet have substance.

The Mohajer (“migrant”), manufactured by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ (IRGC) Qods Aeronautics Industries, was Iran’s first operational drone series, launched in 1985 in order to conduct surveillance over Iraqi lines during the Iran-Iraq War. It was the subject of a mass-market movie by the same name in 1990, which was produced and released under the sponsorship of future president Mohammad Khatami who, at the time, was minister of culture and Islamic Guidance.

Iran provided the Mohajer-2, developed in the early 1990s, both to the late President Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and to Lebanese Hezbollah.

The Mohajer-3 never made it into production, and was quickly supplanted by the Mohajer-4, which was unveiled in September 2014. At the time, Iran’s Deputy Defense Minister bragged that it could shoot down helicopters, fighter jets, and cruise missiles. The Mohajir-4 reportedly has a ten-horsepower engine capable of a 6,500-foot flight ceiling at maximum 75 miles per hour, and has become a mainstay of the regular army’s ground forces. There was a surge in Iranian drone activity over Iraq following the Islamic State capture of Mosul in June 2014 and, in early January 2015, the Islamic State distributed photographs of a downed Mohajer-4 in Jalawla near Kirkuk. In January 2015, an Iranian Mohajer-4B crashed in Deir az-Zour, Syria.

The excerpted article from a news agency closely affiliated with the IRGC announces that the IRGC Ground Forces deployed the Mohajer-6, first unveiled in April 2017, to attack Kurdish insurgents in the mountainous terrain on the Iraqi side of the Iran-Iraq border. The use of the drones to strike at insurgents not in an active combat zone show the increasing centrality of Iran’s drones in the Islamic Republic’s defense doctrine.

The higher flight ceiling of 18,000 feet and the Mohajer-6’s 12-hour flight time represent a significant operational advance. The IRGC reports that the Mohajer-6 can carry guided “vertical” bombs affixed under each wing. Such vertical bombs allow guidance on the yaw axis—making adjustments to the left and right—as the bomb falls; there is no indication that the Iranian operators can control pitch or rate of fall. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

*“What is notable in this operation was the IRGC Ground Forces’ use of UAVs to target the positions of terrorists.”*



Iran unveils “Mohajer-6” drone.

Source: Tasnimnews, <https://newsmedia.tasnimnews.com/Tasnim/Uploaded/Image/1396/11/16/1396111616075383213237564.jpg>

**Source:** “Avalin ‘Amaliyat Barunmarzi Mohajer-6 ba Bombha-ye Gha’im (The First Overseas Operation of the Mohajer-6 with ‘Vertical’ Bombs),” *Tasnim News*, 12 July 2019. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1398/04/21/2052437>

### ***The First Overseas Operation of the Mohajer-6***

*According to the Tasnim News Agency’s defense correspondent, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ [IRGC] Ground Forces said in a statement that, in response to recent acts of terror in the west and northwest of the country, the IRGC attacked these terrorist groups’ positions on the Iraqi Kurdish border with artillery, missiles, UAVs and ground forces.*

*What is notable in this operation was the IRGC Ground Forces’ use of UAVs to target the positions of terrorists. The IRGC Ground Forces’ UAV unit is one of the newly established units, which has been able to perform well in the short time since its formation....*

*The Mohajir-6 UAV is the newest member of the Mohajir UAV family. It is a combat-reconnaissance UAV with a range of 2,000 kilometers [1,242 miles] that provides the capability to perform reconnaissance, surveillance, and combat missions with a large operational radius, long flight time, and with appropriate reliability. The UAV uses precision munitions, is equipped with optical and thermal cameras, and can carry two vertical bombs under its wings. The UAV is also capable of flying at night and day and in adverse weather conditions using advanced optical systems....*