

Shahed Drones

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Shahed Drones Latest News

The United States recently raised serious concerns about the capabilities of Iran's Shahed attack drones.

About Shahed Drones

- Shahed (meaning witness in Farsi) drones are **low-cost, one-way-attack unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)** developed by **Iran**.
- Often referred to as "**kamikaze**" or "**suicide**" drones, they **function essentially as guided missiles** that **fly towards a pre-designated target** and **explode on impact**.
- Most widely used **variants: Shahed-131 and Shahed-136**
- **Russia refers** to the Shahed-131 and Shahed-136 as "**Geran-1**" and "**Geran-2,**" respectively.
- **Each Shahed** is reported to have an estimated **cost between \$20,000 and \$50,000**, making them **cheaper than most other long-range, OWA UAVs**.
- **Ballistic and cruise missiles**, by contrast, can **cost millions of dollars** each.

- This **low cost**, along with a **low-altitude flight profile and self-sacrificial nature**, has seen Shaheds labelled “the **poor man’s cruise missile**”.
- Produced in large numbers, **swarms of Shahed drones can overwhelm air defences** by saturating them from multiple directions at once.

Shahed Drones Features

- The **Shahed-131** has a **range of 700-900 km**, while the **Shahed-136** has the longer range, i.e., between **2,000 and 2,500 kilometres**.
- They are between 2.5 and three metres long and weigh around 200 kg at launch, most of which is the fuel and payload.
- They are **launched using a disposable rocket booster fitted to their underside**. Shortly **after launch**, the **booster is jettisoned**, and a **piston-driven engine takes over** to provide propulsion.
- They can be launched from both static rail mounts as well as vehicles.
- For **navigation**, it uses a combination of **civilian GPS/GLONASS** and an **inertial navigation system (INS)** often **pre-programmed with coordinates** before launch.
- They can be equipped with various warheads, including high-explosive fragmentation, thermobaric, and shrapnel-filled munitions, maximising damage to both personnel and equipment.

Source: **TOI**

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