

Iran in Africa



A Tutorial Overview of Iran's Strategic Influence In Africa

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How does a country like Iran command the attention of the United States? The Iranian government has an abysmal human rights record. They openly persecute homosexuals and religious minorities. Not only do they support terrorist activity, it is one of their main tools of foreign policy. Yet, the President of the United States has given Iran the political legitimacy of a reliable actor on the world stage at the negotiating table. Iran has made its nuclear program a top foreign policy issue for two American presidents.

At a time when the U.S. and western countries are seeking an ever-elusive compromise on Iranian nuclear production, Iran is making strategic plays to win partners in Africa who can help support their nuclear weapons program. Not only does Iran nurture logistical and diplomatic support from African nations, the regime is able to cultivate uranium sources with less scrutiny than through traditional channels.

The Iranian terror proxy group, Hezbollah, has operated inside Africa for decades. Most notable are the group's weapons smuggling activities in East and West Africa. Iran exploits the remoteness of Eastern Sudan and parts of Egypt to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip for Hamas militants. Iran has also used Hezbollah networks in Eastern Africa to transfer weapons into the hands of Kenyan and Somali militants in attempts to attack Israeli interests in the region. Hezbollah in Africa gives Tehran logistical reach and illicit income that can support overseas operations.ⁱ Official members of the Iranian Quds Forces carry out terrorist planning and operations in Africa and have received diplomatic protection from Iranian embassies in Nigeria and Kenya.

In addition to its proxy influence on the ground, Iran maintains a heavy maritime presence in the Red Sea -- which is facilitated through its relationships with Sudan and Eritrea. This naval presence expands Iran's power throughout the East African region and further allows the illicit transport of weapons.ⁱⁱ

Iran seeks to influence important U.S. allies. Algeria has been a valuable partner for the U.S. and its counterterrorism interests throughout the region. Algeria is a base of stability in an area where Libya's power vacuum represents a threat to regional security. While U.S. and Algerian relations are strong, Iranian ties with Algiers garner diplomatic favor at the U.N.ⁱⁱⁱ Allies in vulnerable positions need incentives from the U.S. to shun Iranian overtures.

Africa not only serves Iran as an important sanctuary for illicit activity, but also as a way to gain international support for its nuclear program. Iran's pattern in Africa is to use promises of economic and diplomatic cooperation to befriend countries willing to support its nuclear program at the U.N. and otherwise. Iran also uses the development of diplomatic relationships to ensure a future supply of uranium – Niger, Gabon, and Namibia are three of the world's major uranium exporters.^{iv}

Iran's activity in Africa is a model of their strategic conduct that allows them an asymmetric advantage over the United States in terms of diplomacy and statecraft. This pattern of behavior is adaptable and observable in Latin America as well as in Africa. Where there are weak governing institutions and fertile soil for anti-American sentiment of any form, Iran's totalitarian

oppressors seek global allies, revenue streams, resources, and capabilities that serve them well on the world stage.

Hezbollah and Quds Forces in Africa

Both for the purposes of this overview and in general Hezbollah activity in West Africa is most often considered Iranian activity whether the actors involved are terrorist operatives, financiers, IRGC, Quds Forces, or ministers of the Iranian government. Hezbollah, an international terrorist organization and political movement, is Iran's proxy group in Lebanon and worldwide.

Hezbollah cells are obedient to Iran when instructed. Most Hezbollah cells, whether financially oriented or otherwise, should be considered to have a level of operational capability if required by Iran. In West Africa Hezbollah is deeply involved in illicit activity including drug trafficking and organized crime which finances terrorist cells and operations. Hezbollah currently operates in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, and Nigeria.

The growing Lebanese population in West Africa, and the area's porous borders, has created Hezbollah-friendly regions that allow easy movement and operation for the Iranian proxy group and its allies. While western sanctions have squeezed Iran, the rogue regime and its terrorist proxy group still operate extensively because of Hezbollah's independent fund-raising and illicit activity throughout Western Africa.

The large Lebanese communities in West Africa operate in fairly unregulated economies – allowing Hezbollah to raise funds through money laundering, conflict diamond trading, drug trafficking, and arms dealing. The seizure of ammunition and explosives from a Hezbollah cell on May 30, 2013 in the northern Nigerian city of Kano displays that the group is not only collecting money in West Africa, but also planning and conducting military activities.^v It is important to note that this area of northern Nigeria is the same region where Boko Haram jihadists are most active.

The porous borders of Western Africa have allowed Hezbollah's drug trafficking operations to be a major source of income for the group. Narcotics shipments are transported from West African nations to Mauritania, Mali, and Niger, and then shipped to Northern Africa's Mediterranean coast en route to Europe.

Throughout Hezbollah's years of operation in Western Africa, the group has been able to exploit the region's lawlessness and maximize its effectiveness through cooperation with other transnational groups. These relationships are characterized as "project-based"; networks coalesce and dissolve as opportunities come and go. The more the group operates unimpeded, the deeper the group's influence and relationships are embedded.^{vi}

The importance of Hezbollah's presence and operations in West Africa exemplifies the extent of Iran's reach in a resource rich continent. Having Hezbollah and Lebanese assets in West Africa facilitates further Iranian influence in the area because they have established a base of support and operation. Hezbollah is a declared terrorist group by most Western nations, which makes the group's movements and activities particularly important for Western nations to monitor and ultimately inhibit.

Iran Part I: East Africa



Part I of this document analyzes the Islamic Republic of Iran’s diplomatic, economic, and military influence in East Africa. This section includes countries where Iran has made significant attempts to gain influence through covert and overt actions. As shown in the following reports, Iran’s navy (both commercial and military) maintains a heavy presence in key African states that permit them to use their ports for Iranian access to the Red Sea.^{vii} These countries are proving to be trustworthy allies to the Iranian regime. This section examines Iranian ties with Sudan, Kenya, Eritrea, Tanzania, and Somalia.

1: Sudan

A) Importance: Arms Smuggling and Network-building

Sudan is Iran's primary ally on the continent of Africa, with a relationship that stretches back decades and has featured public acknowledgement from Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. Iran uses Port Sudan as its primary base in the Red Sea, through which it smuggles weapons into Africa and to Hamas in Gaza.^{viii}



B) Arms Smuggling and Manufacturing

Sudan's presence on the Red Sea makes it a perfect military and trading partner with the Islamic Republic. Periodic docking at the Port of Sudan by Iranian warships has raised awareness of Iran's presence in Sudan, and how much it may be helping in its internal and international politics. The Port of Sudan has been used by Iran as the starting point to smuggle arms through Egypt and ultimately onward to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The Port is used to smuggle Iranian arms to Hamas, as well as Islamic groups in Northern and sub-Saharan Africa. In early 2014, Israel stopped and boarded the Klos C, a Panamanian-flagged ship, where they found Iranian weapons on board. After an investigation, the United Nations determined the ship was heading to Sudan.^{ix} U.S. intelligence officials believe these weapons were to be smuggled into the Sinai Peninsula.^x

C) Ally beyond Religion

A recent document detailing a meeting of top Sudanese defense members provides an inside look at the importance and strength of Iranian-Sudanese ties. General Abdalla al-Jaili, Major General of the Popular Defense Forces explains in the document that "Iran is a central partner to the national salvation revolution." Other top Sudanese government officials present at this meeting stress the importance of continuing secret relations with Shi'ite Iran, as well as Sunni Persian Gulf States. Sudan seeks to stay in the middle of the Riyadh-Tehran disputes, and not to be seen as favoring either Iran or Saudi Arabia. The decisions they have made recently continue to exemplify this course. As an example, contrary to previous media reports, the 2014 closure of Iranian cultural centers in Sudan was not due to differences between Sudan and Iran. It was a strategic play of appearances. The purpose of closing the cultural centers was to downplay the Wahhabi group's^{xi}Iran Sudan relationship.

D) Military

The Sudanese have attempted to keep their relationship with Iran a secret, from both the Gulf States and the United States. The purpose of the relationship is important for both Sudan's defense and security. For example, following an Israeli bombing campaign in Khartoum (the fourth since 2009) Iran offered to construct a missile defense system in Khartoum. Fearing international repercussions, the Sudanese government eventually turned down the offer. With the help of Iran, Sudan has been able to develop its own military industrial complex in country.^{xii}

2: Kenya

A) Importance: Nuclear Program and Infrastructure

Faced with sanctions over its nuclear weapons program, Iran needs new trade partners in order to blunt the effectiveness of said sanctions. Kenya has an underdeveloped energy sector that Iran can exploit through increased energy trade.



B) Economic Relations

In 2013, the government of Kenya announced the creation of Vision 2030, a comprehensive program for the transformation of Kenya into a developed state by 2030. Currently, Kenya only produces 1,300 MW of power and as of 2011, only 19.2 percent of its population has access to electricity.^{xiii} In order for Kenya to reach its Vision 2030 goals, it will need to develop significant energy supplies, which Iran with its large oil reserves can provide.

In addition to traditional fossil fuel deals, Iran has taken an interest in promoting the health of the Kenyan economy directly. In 2009, Iran agreed to inject 16 billion dollars to stimulate Kenya's economy. Moving to supply funds to large-scale infrastructure improvements, such as funding the Hola irrigation project in the Tana River District, Iran has built good will.^{xiv} This good will is in Kenya's interest as the port of Mombasa gives Iran access into East and Southern Africa. Mombasa is a hot bed of Al Shabaab weapons trading and recruiting and Al Shabaab is believed to have received weapons from Iran. The specter of large investment potential can equal diplomatic capitol should stronger connections between Iran and Al Shabaab arise.

Along with the agreement to stimulate the Kenyan economy, Iran also began exporting cheap crude oil to the African country. In June 2012, Kenya signed a deal with the Iranian National Oil Company to import over 4 million tons of crude oil per annum from the Islamic Republic. This is another example of Iran gaining influence with a poor African country. In 2012, Kenya was forced by the United States and the European Union to abandon this deal with Iran and comply with the E.U.'s Iranian embargo, or it faces sanctions for purchasing Iranian oil.^{xv}

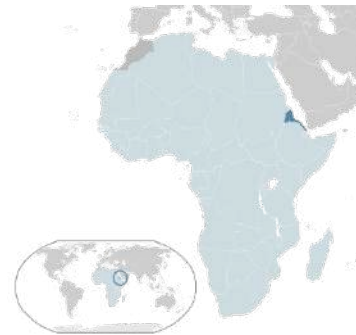
C) Nuclear Program

Kenya's interest in Iran's energy is not limited to oil, but in 2010, Kenya announced that it intends to develop nuclear power plants within ten years. Lacking internal capability to build nuclear power programs, Kenya has reached out to Iran in order to achieve this goal.^{xvi}

3: Eritrea

A) Importance: Nuclear Program and Economic relations

Eritrea is an ally of Iran with both economic and strategic ties. Eritrea hosts Iranian military personnel, and provides ports for the Iranian Navy on the Red Sea while giving Iran's nuclear program rhetorical support. Iranian military access to Eritrea gives Iran a strategic position in the Middle East geo-political equation and another route for arms smuggling to Gaza.^{xvii}



B) Economic Relations

In 2008, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki visited Tehran and met with both then-President Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei. By the end of the two-day visit, the two heads of state had signed four agreements that would increase ties to expand trade, and encourage Iranian investment in Eritrea's agricultural, mining, and energy sectors.^{xviii}

C) Naval Presence

In order to counter the threat posed by Ethiopia, and the United States' pro-Ethiopia stance, Eritrea and the Islamic Republic signed an agreement that permitted Iran to maintain a military presence in the African country. As it has done in Sudan, Iran has used Eritrean ports to dock its military and commercial ships at the ports in Assab and Masawa. Opposition parties in Eritrea have also claimed the government allowed the Islamic Republic to establish naval bases in Eritrea. As we have seen in Sudan and Djibouti, Iran is using Red Sea ports to its advantage to gain growing influence within these states, as well as to advance its agenda in smuggling weapons across the continent and to the Gaza Strip.^{xix} Iran states that its military and naval presence in Eritrea is for anti-piracy operations in order to protect the waterways/naval lanes that its commercial ships use.

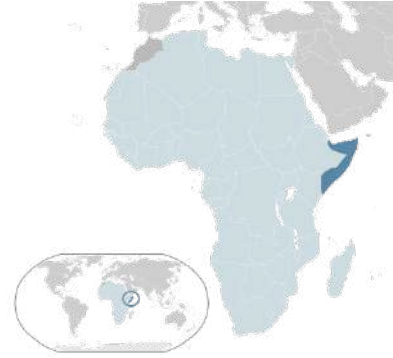
D) Nuclear Program

Eritrea has been very open about its support of Iran's nuclear program. President Isaias Afwerki stated in 2009, "Iran's nuclear program is a source of pride for us and we support the country's stand in this regard." Afwerki would later state that Western nations have no right to interfere in Iran's decision to seek nuclear capabilities.^{xx}

4: Somalia

A) Importance: Terrorism

Iranian operations in Somalia focus on support for Islamic militants in Somalia and their potential to serve Iranian interests throughout the region.



B) al-Shabaab

For many years Iran has been engaged covertly in Somalia. The UN has repeatedly provided substantial evidence that demonstrates Iran's arming of al-Shabaab and Islamic terrorists in Somalia. In July 2013, a UN report explained that experts were able to trace newly-seized RPG-7-type launchers from al-Shabaab militants to an Iranian manufacturer, despite the weapons having been modified and their serial numbers stripped off to prevent tracing.

Iran often uses various routes and brokers in order to evade detection in its arming of Muslim terrorists. One of the most available routes for Iranian arms shipments is through Eritrea, a country in which Iran carries significant influence.

Iran's interest in Somalia dates back to the operations of Somalia's Islamic Courts Union (ICU), the organization that gave rise to Al-Shabaab. UN monitors detected at least three separate shipments of Iranian arms to ICU militants in 2006. One of these shipments was a flight in 2006 that carried machine guns, grenade launchers, and shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles.^{xxi} UN monitors continue to warn the international community about the arming of Somali militants through Iranian distribution networks, according to a 2013 Reuters report.^{xxii}

C) Hezbollah

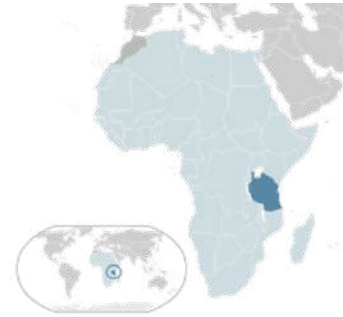
The more chaotic Somalia is, the more Iran is able to exploit the situation and gain influence. For Tehran, Somalia offers a jihadist breeding ground for potential Hezbollah allies, and also a way for the regime to transfer weapons to its Shia ally in Yemen, the Houthi rebels.

According to the UN, Somali fighters were offered various incentives to join Hezbollah: \$2,000 for the families of individual fighters to use while the fighters were in Lebanon; if the fighter was killed, between \$25,000 and \$30,000 would be given to the fighter's family; and when the fighter returned to Somalia after fighting in Lebanon, the fighter would receive a monthly stipend \$100 for an unspecified period of time.^{xxiii}

5: Tanzania

A) Importance: Economic and Military Relations

Iran and Tanzania continue to maintain strong bilateral ties through economic and strategic cooperation. Tanzania has repeatedly supported Iran's nuclear program in public rhetoric. Over the past several years, multiple agreements have been signed to increase economic cooperation between the two countries. Areas of cooperation include agriculture, education, energy, infrastructure, and banking.^{xxiv}



B) Economic Relations

In 2012, thirty-six Iranian oil tankers were reflagged and registered under Tanzanian ownership. Reflagging a ship masks the true owner, and in this case it would have facilitated insuring, financing, and purchasing of the Iranian oil tankers without attracting attention from Western nations. The ship was reflagged at a port in Zanzibar by a Dubai based shipping company, according to Tanzanian officials, and the East African country was quick to defend its ties with Iran and promised that cooperation between the two would continue.^{xxv}

C) Military

Diplomatic relations remain strong between the two countries: in June 2014, Tanzania allowed Iranian warships to dock in its Dar es Salam seaport. Shortly after this display of increasing Iranian naval presence in the seas off Eastern Africa, an Iranian envoy announced that Tehran would begin military cooperation with Tanzania and train Tanzanian navy officers.^{xxvi}

Iran Part II: West Africa



Part II identifies Hezbollah proxy activity, IRGC Quds Force, and Iranian relationships in West Africa. West Africa is vital to U.S. interests regarding counterterrorism operations and energy resources. Recent years have shown aggressive Iranian action in the area to acquire political and economic support for its interests throughout the continent.

1: Nigeria

A) Importance

Nigeria is one of Africa's most economically and geopolitically significant countries – it is the continent's largest oil producing nation and home to the continent's largest population. Nigeria holds influence in various international organizations, including membership with the International Atomic Energy Agency and a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council.



Iran's interest in this strategically significant country began in the 1980's as it established a Shia foothold in Northern Nigeria through an Iranian-trained cleric named Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky. While it is difficult to determine the precise number of Zakzaky's followers, his movement is estimated to include several tens of thousands of followers from among the country's almost 10 million Shia Muslims. Zakzaky's movement has long been a promoter of Iranian state ideology and is currently working to expand the movement throughout Nigeria.^{xxvii}

B) Hezbollah

This foothold in Northern Nigeria has allowed Hezbollah to establish weapons caches and transportation routes in the area. In 2010, the Nigerian government seized 13 containers of Iranian weapons in the Port of Lagos, while in 2013; a Hezbollah cell in the northern Nigerian city of Kano was uncovered. As a proxy for Iran, the hard military power of Hezbollah acts as hard power of Iran in the region through Shiite communities in Northern Nigeria.^{xxviii}

C) Economic Relations

Aside from its less conspicuous influence inside the Western African nation, Iran is also working to improve its working relationship with the Nigerian government. In June of 2014, during a meeting headed by Iran's Minister of Industry and his Nigerian counterpart, the two nations agreed to seek closer cooperation in areas including mining, industry, oil, engineering, and nuclear technology. The Iranian delegation also declared it would explore investments in the automobile, mass housing, and pharmaceutical industries.^{xxix}

D) International Diplomacy

As the major power in West Africa, Nigeria holds power in key international institutions such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UN Security Council (UNSC). Faced with opposition in the international community from traditional power players, Iran will be able to mitigate the impact of international opposition to its nuclear program by building relations with Nigeria.

2: Niger

A) Importance

Niger produced 4,518 tons of uranium in 2013, making it the world's fourth largest producer of uranium and the largest producer of uranium on the continent of Africa. With insufficient uranium resources of its own, Iran seeks to secure supplies from the international market in order to continue its nuclear weapons program.



B) Nuclear Program

Iran has sought economic ties with Niger, demonstrating specific interest in the country's uranium supplies. France has historically been the main export market for Niger's uranium. However, in the last three years, the distribution of profits generated by Niger's uranium has angered Niger's officials who feel that France has gained more from Niger's uranium than Niger has. Attempting to exploit Niger's anger over distribution of profits, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited the country in 2013 seeking a trade-off of Iranian support in education and agriculture for access to Niger's uranium.^{xxx}

3: Sierra Leone & The Ivory Coast

Hezbollah's activities in West Africa has been demonstrated through the U.S. Treasury Department's actions in sanctioning four Lebanese businessmen for the clandestine financing of activities in Sierra Leone, The Ivory Coast, and other West African nations. The men were observed recruiting members and representing themselves as part of Hezbollah's Foreign Relations Department. Moreover, there are several known money exchange houses that have been 'blacklisted' by the U.S. Treasury Department, after being tied to large scale financial transactions used to support drug cartels in West Africa with significant ties to Hezbollah. These activities are enabled through Iran's aid and direction by the provision of diplomatic cover and networks through its diplomatic offices.

Iran Part III: North Africa



Part III examines Iran's relations with North African countries. Iran's strongest partner in the region is Algeria, which has recently, and rapidly, expanded efforts to increase ties with the Islamic Republic. Events that have unfolded in Egypt and Libya after the Arab Spring have left a lack of stability in the region, and leave the possibility for future Iranian penetration into North Africa.

1: Egypt



A) Importance: Return of the Brotherhood

As a traditional ally of the United States since the 1980s in the Near East, Egypt has been a corner stone of American power in the region. Following Arab Spring revolution in Egypt which resulted in the overthrow of the Mubarak Regime in 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi was elected to President of Egypt. This created an opening for Iran to oppose American power in the region by supporting the Morsi government. In the post Morsi era, Iran continues to look for openings and common ground.^{xxxix}

B) Economic Relations

Following his rise to power, Former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi strengthened his country's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. He invited former Iranian president Ahmadinejad to an Islamic Summit in Cairo, the first time an Iranian president had been allowed to Egypt since the 1979 Revolution. Morsi himself visited Tehran following his victory in 2012. The only other time Egypt and Iran possessed any sort of favorable relations was during the Anwar Al-Sadat presidency (1970-1981) for Egypt, and the Shah's rule for Iran. It must be noted both of these leaders had pro-western views.^{xxxix}

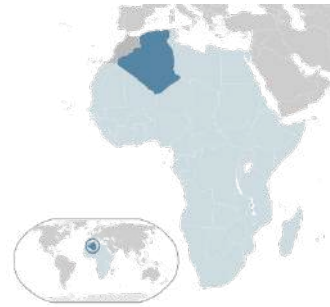
During the Morsi presidency, minor yet significant events occurred that signaled improved relations with Iran. Firstly, during his visit to Cairo, Ahmadinejad offered Egypt a loan that would have assisted the country during a grave economic struggle. Secondly, for the first time since 1979, a direct flight left Cairo to Tehran.^{xxxix} Morsi's calls to improve tourism relations between both states were met with the two countries signing a memorandum in March, 2013, that would help boost the Egyptian tourism sector. Iranians were also apparently seen touring Egypt prior to Morsi's overthrow in the summer of 2013. Thirdly, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt sought to revise the Camp David Accords, which pleased Tehran and scared Israel.^{xxxix} Iran likely sought to capitalize on this decree to form a regional alliance that could have severely threatened Israel's security. Lastly, Iran is believed to have smuggled weapons from Sudan to Hamas, using Egypt as a route during the Morsi Presidency.^{xxxix}

C) Muslim Brotherhood

Ever since the military overthrew Morsi and established the al-Sisi presidency, tense relations with Iran have resumed. Iran called the overthrow of Morsi "improper" and told Morsi's supporters to not give up hope that he could be reinstated. The governments that followed Morsi's quickly suspended the tourist and travel agreement with Iran, claiming national security concerns.^{xxxix} For now, Egypt has sought to dismantle the relationship Morsi built during his one year term. However, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was invited in June by former Egyptian President Adly Mansour to attend his successor's inauguration.^{xxxix} Rouhani, in a speech in New York in September of this year, called for Egypt to allow, not suppress, the Muslim Brotherhood as to have "Egyptians feel compelled to participate in elections in the future."^{xxxix} Iran has interest for a pro-Iran Egyptian government to return, but this scenario seems unlikely at the moment.

2: Algeria

A) Importance: Nuclear Program and Rapid Relations Building
Algeria is one of the United States' most vital allies in counter terror efforts around the globe, as well as a strong partner on the African continent, but Iran has worked to rapidly improve Iranian and Algerian relations since the resumption of diplomatic ties. Relations between Algeria and Iran work to support Iran's nuclear program, while posing a threat a key American relationship.



B) Nuclear Program

An announcement from the Algerian Embassy in Iran, the embassy stated, “The relations between Algeria and Iran have developed in recent years, in a climate of trust, mutual respect and balance of interests reflecting the political will of the two countries to take profit of their economic potentialities and complementarities.”^{xxxix} This includes improving bilateral relations within the following sectors: political, economic, scientific and cultural. What is most concerning is the rapid improvement in scientific relations. Algeria has long supported Iran's “peaceful” nuclear program, even abstaining from an Iranian sanction vote in the UN. Iran has offered nuclear expertise assistance to Algiers, though it is not known if Algeria accepted the offer.

C) International Diplomacy

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika received Iran's new ambassador, Reda Amiri, in December of 2014. Diplomatically, both states have improved inter-state relations since the resumption of diplomatic ties in 2000. Since then, economic and diplomatic ties have quickly increased through multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements and high-level state visits. These include:

1. 2004: a meeting with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Iranian Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani announced due to the improvement of economic, political, and cultural relations between the two countries, that military and defense cooperation had increased.
2. 2007: Ahmadinejad said Iran wanted to further strengthen relations between the two countries, stressing a commitment to completing twenty-two separate cooperation agreements.
3. 2010: Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, in Algiers to discuss Iranian-Algerian bilateral relations, as well as political issues in Africa, Central Asia, and the Palestinian Territories.^{xl}

Iran Part IV: Southern Africa



The concluding segment will discuss Iranian activities in the Southern African region. As Iran continues its nuclear program despite Western sanctions, Malawi and Namibia are two major Uranium producers that Iran has sought to expand ties. Iran is attempting to secure future uranium sources for its nuclear program. This segment also discusses the economic and political importance of South Africa for Iran. The countries examined in part IV are Namibia, Malawi, and South Africa.

Southern Africa

1: South Africa

A) Importance

With a population of 52 million but a GDP of 662 billion (PPP), South Africa is Africa's richest country. This comparative economic importance places South Africa in an important place in international diplomacy with membership in the BRICS countries.



B) Economic Ties

Until 2012, Iran was South Africa's largest supplier of oil. Only under significant pressure from the international community did South Africa stop imports of Iranian oil.^{xli} Ever since then, South Africa has been keen to resume imports of Iranian oil, and in September, 2014, Iran and South Africa officially declared their desire to resume their oil trade. Since oil exports finance the Iranian government, the resumption of exports to South Africa would directly assist the Iranian government in its efforts to resist international action against it over its nuclear program.^{xlii}

C) International Diplomacy

As an important member of international organizations such as the BRICS, diplomatic overtures to South Africa from Iran can be important in Iran's efforts to resist international pressure over its nuclear program.

2: Malawi

A) Importance

Malawi produced 1132 tons of uranium in 2013, making it the world's tenth largest producer of uranium and Africa's third largest. Without significant uranium production of its own, Iran needs to secure supplies from the international market in order to continue its nuclear program.

B) International Diplomacy

In August 2014, President Peter Mutharika of Malawi declared that his country will open an embassy in Tehran and continue to expand bilateral relations.^{xliii}



3: Namibia

A) Importance

Namibia produced 4323 tons of uranium in 2013, making it the world's fifth largest producer of uranium and Africa's second largest.



B) Uranium

Since 1976, Iran has owned a 15% stake in the Rössing Uranium Mine in Namibia in conjunction with the Rio Tinto Group and IDC. The Rössing Uranium Mine is the world's longest running open pit uranium mine, and produces the majority of Namibia's uranium. United Nations sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program have failed to affect this business relationship.^{xliv}

C) International Diplomacy

In 2013, Iran reopened its embassy in Namibia after a 16-year hiatus and announced both countries would be boosting economic and commercial ties.^{xlv}

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