

WAVERLEY GATEWAY GUIDE

Connecting International Capital with Emerging & Frontier Markets

IRAN

Middle East

Dialogue | Trust | Partnership

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WHERE AND HOW TO ENTER

KEY INVESTMENT LOCATIONS

Location / Region	Strategic Importance	Priority Sectors
Tehran	Capital and political/economic center; conventional foreign commercial access effectively closed under current sanctions	Services, state administration
Kharg Island	Principal oil-export terminal, normally handling roughly 90% of Iran's crude exports; physically intact but largely idle under a reimposed US naval blockade	Oil export infrastructure
Chabahar port (Sistan-Baluchestan)	Non-Persian Gulf port outside the Strait of Hormuz chokepoint, historically of interest for India-Afghanistan-Central Asia transit	Port logistics, transit trade
South Pars gas field (shared with Qatar)	World's largest gas field; Iran's share remains largely undeveloped due to sanctions	Natural gas (undeveloped potential)
Isfahan / Natanz nuclear-industrial corridor	Central Iran's nuclear and heavy-industry cluster, repeatedly struck since February 2026	Nuclear and heavy industry (conflict zone)
Bandar Abbas	Strait of Hormuz-adjacent port and naval chokepoint, high conflict exposure	Port logistics, naval infrastructure
Free trade zones (Kish, Qeshm, Arvand)	Nominally liberalized zones, though practical foreign access is severely constrained by financial-sector isolation	Trade, limited manufacturing

INVESTOR ENTRY ROUTES

- Comprehensive US sanctions and the UN, EU and UK sanctions reimposed after the September 2025 snapback prohibit or severely restrict investment for investors in most jurisdictions
- Limited non-sanctioned-jurisdiction trade (chiefly China and select Asian buyers) continues via intermittent, blockade-dependent oil shipments
- Free trade zones (Kish, Qeshm, Arvand) remain nominally open but practical foreign engagement is minimal given financial-sector isolation
- Chabahar port retains a narrow, India-linked transit role outside the Strait of Hormuz chokepoint, subject to its own sanctions carve-out history
- Humanitarian and NGO channels remain the primary form of international engagement given the scale of the ongoing crisis
- A finalized nuclear-sanctions settlement under the June 2026 US-Iran memorandum of understanding framework, if reached, could reopen conventional channels

MARKET-ENTRY OBSERVATION

Iran's economy is in acute crisis, compounded by an active war. Following US-Israeli strikes beginning February 28, 2026 that killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and the E3-triggered UN snapback that reimposed UN, EU and UK sanctions on September 27, 2025 (effectively ending the JCPOA), the economy has deteriorated sharply: the IMF projects a 2026 real GDP contraction of roughly 5-6%,

and inflation estimates for 2026 range from the Central Bank's own figure of roughly 57-83% to the Statistical Centre of Iran's 62-89%, with the IMF's own average forecast around 69%. The rial has collapsed from about 1.35 million per dollar at the start of 2026 to a record low near 2.25 million on the informal market by early September 2026, even as the official Central Bank rate remains fixed around 1.5 million - a gap illustrating the currency's practical non-convertibility. Food prices have roughly doubled over the year (meat up about 178%, bread and cereals up about 139%), and the official minimum wage covers only around 37% of an estimated basic living basket, with rural inflation (108%) running well above urban (85%).

A US naval blockade, reinstated in July 2026 after a brief pause, has left the Kharg Island terminal - which normally handles roughly 90% of Iran's crude exports - largely idle again, pushing oil exports, the government's principal source of hard currency, close to zero; Rystad Energy estimated war damage to Iran's energy infrastructure at up to \$58 billion. A June 2026 US-Iran memorandum of understanding, signed in Islamabad, briefly reopened the Strait of Hormuz and eased the blockade, but unraveled amid mutual accusations of violations; President Masoud Pezeshkian used his September 2026 UN General Assembly address to urge Washington to revive the memorandum before the November 2026 US midterms, while US officials remained skeptical and President Trump warned of further military options. Iran's Supreme Leader succession itself remains contested: the Assembly of Experts named Ali Khamenei's son Mojtaba Khamenei as the new Supreme Leader on March 9, 2026, in a wartime vote whose online/in-person format, vote count and process were all separately disputed by multiple outlets and by at least one senior figure, Ali Larijani, who was killed in a subsequent Israeli strike on March 17, 2026.

INVESTOR RISK & MARKET ACCESS

KEY ENTRY BARRIERS

Issue	Potential Impact	Possible Mitigation
Comprehensive multilateral sanctions	UN, EU, UK and US sanctions reimposed or maintained following the September 2025 snapback	None available to investors in sanctioning jurisdictions
Active war and infrastructure risk	US-Israeli strikes have hit nuclear, military and energy infrastructure since February 2026, with up to \$58B in estimated energy-sector damage	None realistic absent a durable ceasefire
Oil-export blockade	A US naval blockade has repeatedly idled the Kharg Island terminal, cutting the government's principal hard-currency source	None available to outside investors
Currency collapse and non-convertibility	The rial fell from about 1.35 million to a record 2.25 million per dollar on the informal market in 2026, far below the fixed official rate	None; profit repatriation is effectively impossible for conventional investors
Severe inflation	Consumer inflation estimates range from roughly 57% to 89% depending on source	None available to outside investors
Contested political succession	The Assembly of Experts' March 2026 selection of Mojtaba Khamenei as Supreme Leader was disputed over process, vote count and alleged IRGC pressure on members	Monitor political developments for governance-stability signals
Unresolved nuclear-sanctions framework	The June 2026 US-Iran memorandum of understanding lapsed without a final deal as of September 2026, with IAEA inspection access still constrained	Monitor negotiation developments for any path to sanctions relief

INVESTOR RISK NOTE

Iran combines an active, still-unresolved war with the United States and Israel, comprehensive multilateral sanctions reimposed after the 2025 JCPOA snapback, a collapsed currency, and a contested political succession at the apex of the state. Conventional commercial investment is not realistic for investors in sanctioning jurisdictions, and the risk and compliance exposure for all others is severe and highly fluid.

MARKET ACCESS

Iran is excluded from most conventional international market-access frameworks under current sanctions; its own regional trade relationships (China, select Asian buyers, intermittent Gulf and Central Asian commerce) continue on a narrow, blockade-dependent and largely state-directed basis. The domestic market remains large (roughly 90 million people), but near-total currency non-convertibility and financial-sector isolation make it effectively inaccessible to conventional foreign investors at this time.

WHO SHOULD THE INVESTOR MEET?

INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Actor	Why It Matters	Waverley Engagement Angle
Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei	Named March 9, 2026 following his father's death in a US-Israeli strike; the succession process and its legitimacy have been disputed by multiple accounts	Not a realistic engagement channel; central to political-risk monitoring
President Masoud Pezeshkian	In office since 2024; has continued to seek a negotiated settlement with the US while the war and sanctions continue	Relevant to tracking the negotiation trajectory, not a direct commercial channel
National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)	Operates Kharg Island and the bulk of Iran's oil-export infrastructure, currently blockade-constrained	Central counterparty for any future energy-sector re-engagement
Central Bank of Iran	Maintains an official exchange rate far below the market rate, with limited practical ability to defend the currency	Relevant to currency and repatriation risk assessment
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)	Reported by multiple outlets to have pressured Assembly of Experts members during the succession process; central to Iran's security and economic footprint	High-risk, not a realistic engagement channel for conventional investors
Assembly of Experts	Body that selected the new Supreme Leader in a disputed wartime vote	Relevant to political-risk monitoring
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	Maintains limited, contested inspection access to Iran's nuclear program under its comprehensive safeguards agreement	Relevant source for tracking the nuclear-negotiation trajectory

CURRENT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CHANNELS

Conventional business channels are almost entirely closed; what commercial activity continues runs through state entities such as NIOC, free trade zones, and narrow non-sanctioned-jurisdiction trade relationships, chiefly with Chinese and other Asian buyers of residual oil shipments.

INVESTOR PROFILE BEST SUITED

Not suited to conventional investors of any description at this time. The only realistic engagement for most investors is situational monitoring pending a durable ceasefire and a finalized nuclear-sanctions settlement; any commercial activity that does continue is effectively limited to entities in non-sanctioning jurisdictions willing to accept extreme compliance, currency and physical-security risk.

FROM INTELLIGENCE TO ENGAGEMENT

- STEP 1: Monitor the war and blockade
Track the war's trajectory and the status of the Strait of Hormuz and Kharg Island blockade.
- STEP 2: Track the nuclear-sanctions framework
Follow the US-Iran negotiation process for any finalized settlement.
- STEP 3: Monitor political succession
Track governance stability at the apex of the Iranian state.
- STEP 4: Confirm sanctions exposure
Verify jurisdiction-specific legal prohibitions before any engagement, however limited.
- STEP 5: Reassess periodically
Waverley does not currently recommend conventional investment planning for Iran and will revisit as conditions evolve.

WAVERLEY'S ROLE

- Situational monitoring of the war, sanctions and nuclear-negotiation trajectory rather than market-entry facilitation
- Sanctions-compliance signposting for investors assessing jurisdiction-specific legal exposure
- Political and succession-risk monitoring at the apex of the Iranian state
- Re-engagement readiness assessment should a durable ceasefire and sanctions settlement be reached

INVESTOR CALL TO ACTION

Waverley does not recommend conventional investment planning for Iran at this time; investors should engage Waverley for situational monitoring only.

Any entity considering even narrow, non-sanctioned-jurisdiction engagement should commission a full jurisdiction-specific sanctions review before proceeding.

WAVERLEY INVESTOR INTELLIGENCE & OPPORTUNITY PIPELINE

Waverley identifies no conventional investment opportunity pipeline for Iran at this time, given the active war, comprehensive multilateral sanctions, currency collapse and contested political succession. Monitoring continues for any durable ceasefire, finalized nuclear-sanctions settlement, or material change in the operating environment.

POSITIONING

Waverley views Iran as currently among the most severe-risk environments in this series: an active, unresolved war that killed the former Supreme Leader, comprehensive multilateral sanctions reimposed after the 2025 JCPOA snapback, a rial that has lost roughly 40% of its value against the dollar in 2026 alone, and a contested political succession at the apex of the state.

This briefing is intended for situational awareness rather than as an invitation to deploy capital; Waverley will revisit Iran's status as the war, sanctions and nuclear-negotiation trajectory develop.

SELECTED SOURCES

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