

Apple in talks to sell iPhone in Iran: report

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A man checks out his new iPhone 6 Plus outside the Apple store in Pasadena, California on September 19, 2014

Apple is in preliminary talks to sell the iPhone in Iran, if sanctions are eased on the Middle East nation, the Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday.

Citing unnamed sources, the newspaper said Apple had begun talks with distributors to open official sales channels in Iran if authorized.

Apple currently does not have any sales outlets or partners in Iran, but its products are available through unofficial sellers, the Journal noted.

Queried by AFP, Apple declined to comment on the report.

According to the newspaper, Apple is discussing the possibility of having Iranian partners sell Apple products at "premium resellers," without opening any Apple-branded stores.

The company has used this model in other countries in Europe and Asia.

If Apple enters the market, it would join a number of companies looking at the large market, which has been largely inaccessible to US firms since 1979, when Washington imposed its first embargo.

Boeing said earlier this month it has sold plane parts to Iran Air, the first time it has done business with Tehran's national carrier since the 1979 hostage crisis.

In April, the US government issued a license allowing Boeing, for a "limited period of time," to provide "spare parts that are for safety purposes" to Iran. Boeing is still not allowed to sell new planes to Iran.

General Electric has also obtained a license to sell spare airliner parts to Iran.

Apple could benefit from a US decision in May to lift rules that had barred the sale of consumer communications technologies in Iran, the newspaper said.

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