

# Authorities say Apple shuts down Iranian apps

August 25 2017, by Amir Vahdat

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Apple Inc. has removed all Iranian mobile apps from its App Store, authorities said Friday.

Ali Maleki, who works for Iran's biggest e-commerce site Digikala, said the apps were shut down around 10 days ago. He said Digikala's app was removed "based on the new type of sanctions which were imposed against Iran."

In reaction to Apple's decision, Telecommunication Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said Apple should respect its Iranian consumers.

Apple, based in Cupertino, California, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Jahromi tweeted: "11% of Iran's mobile phone market share is owned by Apple. Giving respect to consumer rights is a principle today which Apple has not followed. We will follow up the cutting of the apps legally."

The move comes two years after the historic nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, in which Iran accepted curbs on its contested nuclear program in return for lifting sanctions. U.S. legislation passed earlier this month imposed mandatory penalties on people involved in Iran's ballistic missile program and anyone who does business with them.

Apple does not officially do business in Iran or any other Gulf countries, but many Iranians purchase its products from stores inside Iran.

Many Iranians using social media criticized the Apple decision and have created #StopRemovingIranianApps to show their anger over the move.

Twitter user Mohammad Rasul who is a tech enthusiast tweeted: "All the apps deleted from the App Store, does not have any relation to Iranian government! US Sanctions targeting people."

Jamal Abdi, policy director of the National Iranian American Council based in Washington, said in a statement that Apple's move has the effect of punishing the Iranian people, not Iran's government.

"We trust that Apple shares our interest in encouraging young Iranian tech entrepreneurs and promoting internet freedom around the world," he said. "We hope they will respond and look forward to discussing these matters with them."

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Citation: Authorities say Apple shuts down Iranian apps (2017, August 25) retrieved 22 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-08-iran-media-apple-iranian-apps.html>

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