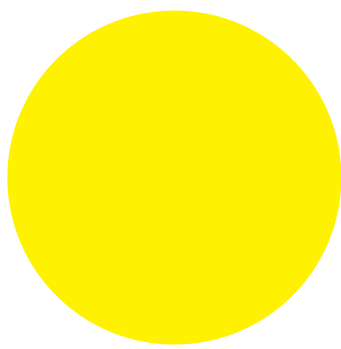


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Resilience under sanctions



By M.A. Mokarrami
Journalist, commentator

O P I N I O N
E X C L U S I V E

Iran is once again facing renewed international sanctions and intensified economic pressure from the United States. At the same time, meaningful negotiations to lift these sanctions remain out of reach. Western governments, especially Washington, are demanding concessions on nuclear, defense and regional issues, while Iran insists that any talks must be based on equality and mutual respect. In this situation, where diplomacy is limited and no immediate relief from sanctions is expected, the essential question is how Iran can manage the economic consequences until fair conditions for dialogue are restored. The answer lies in combining active external engagement with practical and disciplined domestic economic policies.

Diplomacy must be used not only for political messaging but also to secure economic interests. Genuine economic diplomacy requires Iranian embassies and the Economic Diplomacy Department of the Foreign Ministry to identify trade opportunities, investment capacities and mutual needs in host countries. Economic experts can play a more effective role by mapping markets, reducing bureaucratic obstacles and creating direct communication between Iranian and foreign businesses through chambers of commerce, exhibitions and digital platforms. The region offers the most realistic options. A large part of Iran's trade is already with neighboring countries such as Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq. Expanding diplomatic visits, improving customs infrastructure, developing transit routes and establishing local currency mechanisms can help make these relationships more stable and productive. At the same time, Iran should deepen partnerships with non-Western powers such as China and Russia, and use frameworks like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and

BRICS to access markets, financial systems and technologies that are less influenced by Western sanctions. Still, diplomacy alone is not sufficient. To withstand economic pressure, Iran needs a strong and flexible internal economy. In a time of limited resources and financial restrictions, the focus should be on preserving production, employment and economic stability. Support must be directed to firms that genuinely create value, operate transparently and maintain responsible financial practices. Companies with healthy performance, proper corporate governance and export capacity—such as many listed firms—should receive tax incentives, predictable regulations and easier access to financing. Providing working capital for creditworthy firms is critical so they can continue operating and investing. Energy, which is vital for industry and services, should be supplied through transparent and market-based mechanisms, such as commodity exchanges, to prevent disruptions for productive companies. Exporters should be allowed to sell their foreign cur-

rency earnings in official markets based on real supply and demand, enabling them to benefit fairly from their efforts and reinvest in growth. Macroeconomic policy must support efficient resource allocation. Artificially suppressing interest rates may seem helpful but often results in misused credit, rent-seeking and weaker productivity. Realistic interest rates help direct capital toward businesses that can use it effectively to generate added value. Similarly, unnecessary price controls in competitive markets should be avoided. When prices are allowed to reflect real conditions, they send accurate signals to producers and investors. If a sector faces higher demand or supply shortages, increased prices encourage new investment, expand production and eventually stabilize the market naturally. In contrast, fixed prices can create shortages, discourage innovation and reduce quality. The government should instead focus on regulating monopolistic sectors, ensuring fair competition and supporting low-income households through targeted welfare measures

rather than across-the-board price fixing. Economic resilience also depends on transparency, stable regulations and trust between the government and private sector. Producers, exporters and entrepreneurs are on the frontline of the economic struggle. Just as soldiers in military conflict are supported to defend the country, those who sustain the economy under sanctions—by creating jobs, generating foreign currency and keeping industries alive—deserve full support and a predictable environment. Until fair negotiations are possible, Iran can limit the damage of sanctions by pursuing a dual strategy. Abroad, it should strengthen economic diplomacy, especially with neighbors and strategic partners in Asia and Eurasia. At home, it should implement reforms that channel resources to productive sectors, support value-creating businesses and maintain macroeconomic discipline. This approach will not eliminate sanctions, but it can help Iran protect its economy, reduce social harm and be better prepared for the moment when diplomatic opportunities return.