



# IRAN IN FOCUS

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## Congress Must Reauthorize the Iran Sanctions Act

The Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) is a core element of U.S. sanctions on Iran. Originally passed in 1996 as the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, the law targets foreign entities supporting Iran’s energy sector and those aiding Tehran’s attempts to acquire WMD and advanced conventional weapons. ISA will expire in December unless Congress extends it. To implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the administration waived all energy-related sanctions, but has pledged that it will snap back these sanctions should Iran violate the JCPOA. It is crucial that Congress reauthorize ISA to ensure that the architecture is in place for “snapback” sanctions should Iran violate the nuclear agreement.

### Reauthorization of ISA would in no way violate the JCPOA.

- Reauthorization of ISA would not impose any new sanctions on Iran. The current waivers would remain in effect.
- The JCPOA itself envisioned that ISA would be reauthorized—Annex 5 requires the United States, eight years after transition day, to “seek such legislative action as may be appropriate” to terminate ISA provisions. This would have been entirely unnecessary if the parties thought ISA would not be in effect.
- In addition to targeting Iran’s nuclear program, ISA was originally designed to pressure Iran to cease support for terrorism and its ballistic missile program. ISA provides key legal underpinnings to enable Congress to sanction non-nuclear activities.
- ISA is key to maintaining sanctions that target suppliers of advanced conventional arms to Iran.
- Reauthorization would send a strong signal to Iran that Congress is carefully scrutinizing Tehran’s actions. Failure to reauthorize would signal that the United States has no effective and immediate response for Iranian violations of the JCPOA.

### ISA mandates that the United States impose sanctions on entities that:

- Assist Iran to acquire or develop chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons or related technologies.
- Assist Iran to acquire or develop destabilizing numbers and types of advanced conventional weapons.
- Provide key support to Iran’s energy section. Those sanctions were waived pursuant to the JCPOA and will remain waived if ISA is extended.