

Iran's Revolutionary Guards extend control over Tehran's oil exports, sources say

LONDON/DUBAI, Dec 18 (Reuters) - Iran's Revolutionary Guards have tightened their grip on the country's oil industry and control up to half the exports that generate most of Tehran's revenue and fund its proxies across the Middle East, according to Western officials, security sources and Iranian insiders.

All aspects of the oil business have come under the growing influence of the Guards, from the shadow fleet of tankers that secretively ship sanctioned crude, to logistics and the front companies selling the oil, mostly to China, according to more than a dozen people interviewed by Reuters.

The extent of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) control over oil exports has not previously been reported.

Despite tough Western sanctions designed to choke Iran's energy industry, reimposed by former U.S. President Donald Trump in 2018, Iran generates more than \$50 billion a year in oil revenue, by far its largest source of foreign currency and its principal connection to the global economy.

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