

Act on the Marine Areas of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, 1993

PART I
Territorial sea

Article 1
Sovereignty

The sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran extends, beyond its land territory, internal waters and its islands in the Persian Gulf, the strait of Hormuz and the Oman Sea, to a belt of sea, adjacent to the baseline, described as the territorial sea.

This sovereignty extends to the airspace over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil.

Article 2
Outer limit

The breadth of the territorial sea is 12 nautical miles, measured from the baseline. Each nautical mile is equal to 1,852 metres.

The islands belonging to Iran, whether situated within or outside its territorial sea, have, in accordance with this Act, their own territorial sea.

Article 3
Baseline

In the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured is that one determined in Decree No. 2/250-67 dated 31 Tir 1352 (22 July 1973) of the Council of Ministers (annexed to this Act); in other areas and islands, the low-water line along the coast constitutes the baseline.

Waters on the landward side of the baseline of the territorial sea, and waters between islands belonging to Iran, where the distance of such islands does not exceed 24 nautical miles, form part of the internal waters and are under the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Article 4
Delimitation

Wherever the territorial sea of Iran overlaps the territorial seas of the States with opposite or adjacent coasts, the dividing line between the territorial seas of Iran and those states shall be, unless otherwise agreed between the two parties, the median line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest point on the baseline of both States.

Article 5
Innocent passage

The passage of foreign vessels, except as provided for in article 9, is subject to the principle of innocent passage so long as it is not prejudicial to good order, peace and security of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Passage, except as in cases of force majeure, shall be continuous and expeditious.

Article 6
Requirements of innocent passage

Passage of foreign vessels, in cases when they are engaged in any of the following activities, shall not be considered innocent and shall be subject to relevant civil and criminal laws and regulations:

- (a) Any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, or in any other manner in violation of the principles of international law;
- (b) Any exercise or practice with weapons of any kind;
- (c) Any act aimed at collecting information prejudicial to the national security, defence or economic interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- (d) Any act of propaganda aimed at affecting the national security, defence or economic interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- (e) The launching, landing or transferring on board of any aircraft or helicopter, or any military devices or personnel to another vessel or to the coast;
- (f) The loading or unloading of any commodity, currency or person contrary to the laws and regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- (g) Any act of pollution of the marine environment contrary to the rules and regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- (h) Any act of fishing or exploitation of the marine resources;
- (i) The carrying out of any scientific research and cartographic and seismic surveys or sampling activities;
- (j) Interfering with any systems of communication or any other facilities or installations of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- (k) Any other activity not having a direct bearing on passage.

Article 7
Supplementary laws and regulations

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran shall adopt such other regulations as are necessary for the protection of its national interests and the proper conduct of innocent passage.

Article 8
Suspension of innocent passage

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, inspired by its high national interests and to defend its security, may suspend the innocent passage in parts of its territorial sea.

Article 9
Exceptions to innocent passage

Passage of warships, submarines, nuclear-powered ships and vessels or any other floating objects or vessels carrying nuclear or other dangerous or noxious substances harmful to the environment, through the territorial sea is subject to the prior authorization of the relevant authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Submarines are required to navigate on the surface and to show their flag.

Article 10
Criminal jurisdiction

In the following cases, the investigation, prosecution and punishment in connection with any crimes committed on board the ships passing through the territorial sea is within the jurisdiction of the judicial authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- (a) If the consequences of the crime extend to the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- (b) If the crime is of a kind to disturb the peace and order of the country or the public order of the territorial sea;
- (c) If the master of the ship or a diplomatic agent or consular officer of the flag State asks for the assistance and investigation;
- (d) If such investigation and prosecution is essential for the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.

Article 11
Civil jurisdiction

The competent authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran may stop, divert or detain a ship and its crew for the enforcement of attachment orders or court judgements if:

- (a) The ship is passing through the territorial sea after leaving the internal waters of Iran;
- (b) The ship is lying in the territorial sea of Iran;

(c) The ship is passing through the territorial sea, provided that the origin of the attachment order or court judgement rests in the obligations or requirements arising from the civil liability of the ship itself.

PART II

Contiguous zone

Article 12

Definition

The contiguous zone is an area adjacent to the territorial sea the outer limit of which is 24 nautical miles from the baseline.

Article 13

Civil and criminal jurisdiction

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran may adopt measures necessary to prevent the infringement of laws and regulations in the contiguous zone, including security, customs, maritime, fiscal, immigration, sanitary and environmental laws and regulations and investigation and punishment of offenders.

PART III

Exclusive economic zone and continental shelf

Article 14

Sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the exclusive economic zone

Beyond its territorial sea, which is called the exclusive economic zone, the Islamic Republic of Iran exercises its sovereign rights and jurisdiction with regard to:

- (a) Exploration, exploitation, conservation and management of all natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the seabed and subsoil thereof and its superjacent waters, and with regard to other economic activities for the production of energy from water, currents and winds. These rights are exclusive;
- (b) Adoption and enforcement of appropriate laws and regulations, especially for the following activities:
 - (i) The establishment and use of artificial islands and other installations and structures, laying of submarine cables and pipelines and the establishment of relevant security and safety zones;
 - (ii) Any kind of research;

- (iii) The protection and preservation of the marine environment;
- (c) Such sovereign rights as granted by regional or international treaties.

Article 15

Sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the continental shelf

The provisions of article 14 shall apply mutatis mutandis to the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of the Islamic Republic of Iran in its continental shelf, which comprises the seabed and subsoil of the marine areas that extend beyond the territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of the land territory.

Article 16

Prohibited activities

Foreign military activities and practices, collection of information and any other activity inconsistent with the rights and interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf are prohibited.

Article 17

Scientific activities, exploration and research

Any activity to recover drowned objects and scientific research and exploration in the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf is subject to the permission of the relevant authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Article 18

Preservation of the environment and natural resources

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran shall take appropriate measures for the protection and preservation of the marine environment and proper exploitation of living and other resources of the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf.

Article 19

Delimitation

The limits of the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf of the Islamic Republic of Iran, unless otherwise determined in accordance with bilateral agreements, shall be a line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest point on the baselines of two States.

Article 20

Civil and criminal jurisdiction

The Islamic Republic of Iran shall exercise its criminal and civil jurisdiction against offenders of the laws and regulations in the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf and shall, as appropriate, investigate or detain them.

Article 21
Right of hot pursuit

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its right of hot pursuit against offenders of laws and regulations relating to its internal waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf, in such areas and the high seas.

PART IV
Final provisions

Article 22
Executive regulations

The Council of Ministers shall specify the mandates and responsibilities [powers and duties] of different ministries and organizations charged with the enforcement of this Act.

The said ministries and organizations shall, within one year after the approval of this Act, prepare the necessary regulations and have them approved by the Council of Ministers.

Pending the adoption of new executive regulations, the existing rules and regulations shall remain in force.

Article 23

All laws and regulations contrary to the present Act, upon its ratification, are hereby abrogated.

The above Act, comprising 23 articles, was ratified at the plenary meeting of Tuesday, the thirty-first day of Farvardin, one thousand three hundred and seventy-two (20 April 1993), of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and was approved by the Council of Guardians on Ordibehesht 12, 1372 (2 May 1993).