

Iran's President Advances Ties with Africa

written by Ezba Walayat | July 18, 2023



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi visited Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe in July 2023, marking the first visit by an Iranian president to Africa in over a decade. In 2013, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was the last leader of Iran who visited Africa. The recent trip is being considered as an Iran's attempt to broaden its economic relationships in the face of severe U.S. sanctions. Iran's Foreign ministry has said in a statement, "Iran's trade with African countries will increase to more than \$2 billion this year." During his visit, Raisi signed a number of agreements with the three countries. Iran signed a total of five memorandums with East Africa's economic powerhouse, Kenya, for information technology, fisheries, animal products, and investment promotion. As per Kenya's foreign ministry, "Iran's President trip to Kenya will provide the two countries an opportunity to review and re-energize their bilateral relations for the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries." Furthermore, Iran and Zimbabwe have signed 12 agreements in areas of research, science and technology initiatives as well as in the fields of energy, agriculture, medicines, and telecommunications.



The visit by Raisi to Africa was a significant event, and it is likely to have a lasting impact on relations between the two sides. It remains to be seen how these relations will develop in the years to come, but the potential for closer cooperation is certainly there. Iran is increasing its diplomatic outreach to developing countries, in order to bolster support with friends who were also subject to US sanctions, Raisi travelled to three Latin American countries in June 2023. The latest agreements signed during Raisi's visit to Africa are being contemplated as a step towards strengthening relations between Iran and Africa. However, it remains to be seen how much these agreements will actually translate into increased trade and investment. The future of relations between Iran and Africa will likely depend on a number of factors, including the outcome of the ongoing nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States. If the negotiations are successful and the sanctions are lifted, Iran will be able to more easily trade with African countries. However, even if the sanctions are not lifted, Iran is likely to continue to seek closer ties with Africa as a way to diversify its economy and reduce its reliance on the West.