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Iran - Intellectual Property

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Iran - Intellectual Property

1. What is the current legal landscape for Intellectual Property in your jurisdiction?

Iran has undergone significant legislative reform in the field of IP, particularly with the enactment of the Industrial Property Protection Law in 2024. This law replaces the previous Patents, Industrial Designs, and Trademarks Registration Act 2008 and reflects a more structured approach to modern IP standards, aligning more closely with international practices. The legal framework now marks the latest evolution in the country's intellectual property laws over the past century. It has been designed to align with current economic, social, scientific, and technological advancements. The evolving Iranian IP framework presents both challenges and opportunities. It is hoped that the current gaps will be clarified in the upcoming executive regulations currently under preparation and, eventually, through judicial practice.

Copyright and software rights are separately governed under the following key laws: the Law for the Protection of Authors, Composers, and Artists' Rights 1970, the Law on Translation and Reproduction of Books, Periodicals, and Audio Works 1973, and the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Computer Software Creators 2000. While Iran is not a member of the WTO and is yet to accede to major treaties such as the Berne Convention, it is a member of WIPO, Madrid System, and many other IP treaties and has implemented a functional national IP system.

The Iran IP Center is active, and rights holders, both domestic and foreign, can register and enforce their rights. All IP-related disputes, such as those seeking injunctions, damages, cancellation, or seizure of infringing goods, fall under the jurisdiction of a specialised judicial complex in Tehran. Similarly, Criminal IP cases are to be handled by a specialised prosecution office and court in Tehran. Alternative dispute resolution is available but limited. According to the new IP Law, arbitration is permitted for IP disputes except those involving the substantive validity of a registered right, as such issues affect public interest. Arbitration awards are enforceable by Iranian courts. Notably, international sanctions do not restrict IP protection, and many multinational corporations continue to file and maintain their portfolios in Iran.

2. What three essential pieces of advice would you give to clients involved in Intellectual Property matters?

First, register early and broadly. Given that Iran is a first-to-file jurisdiction, registering your trademarks, patents, and industrial designs at the earliest possible stage is essential. Many enforcement and litigation tools are only available to registered rights holders.

Second, ensure full documentation. This includes maintaining records of authorship or ownership, registration certificates, licensing agreements, and use in commerce. Proper documentation is not only important for enforcing rights but also for defending against third-party claims and during renewals or assignment procedures.

Third, monitor and act. Rights holders should engage in periodic market surveillance both onsite and online, and monitor the Official Gazette and the electronic bulletin of the Iran IP Center, for conflicting

applications. If infringements occur, swift action, whether through cease-and-desist letters, administrative complaints, or court proceedings, often improves the chance of a favourable resolution. Engaging with local counsel familiar with administrative and judicial practice is key.

3. What are the greatest threats and opportunities in Intellectual Property law in the next 12 months?

A key opportunity lies in the growing public and governmental awareness of the economic importance of IP, particularly in the pharmaceutical, tech, and creative sectors. This shift is encouraging more local innovation and may lead to stronger IP enforcement practices over time.

On the other hand, the greatest threat remains the lack of international treaty integration. While national laws are improving, the absence of adherence to the TRIPS or Berne Convention limits cross-border efficiency and can create practical hurdles for global rights management. Another area of risk is inconsistent enforcement at the judicial level, where specialised IP knowledge among judges remains uneven.

However, the direction of reform, especially following the Industrial Property Protection Law 2024, suggests that improvements are underway. It is expected that some of the current uncertainties and gaps in the regulations will be addressed in the forthcoming executive regulations that are under preparation. Firms that invest in a proper IP strategy now will be better positioned as the landscape matures.

4. How do you ensure high client satisfaction levels are maintained by your practice (Intellectual Property)?

We prioritise responsiveness, reliability, and expertise. Clients are kept informed at every stage of the process, from filing to enforcement. We tailor our advice based on the commercial priorities of each client, ensuring that legal solutions are practical and risk-sensitive. We also invest in client education, explaining not only what is possible under Iranian law but also where challenges might arise, and how to manage them.

In addition, we periodically contribute to well-known IP platforms, either through publishing specialised articles or by providing answers to Q&A forums. We also issue regular newsletters to keep our clients updated on the latest developments across different sectors, including intellectual property.

Our IP team collaborates closely with our litigation and corporate departments to provide holistic support. We understand that clients rely on us not just for technical filings, but for strategic foresight. Many of our multinational clients appreciate our ability to navigate the local landscape while coordinating with their global counsel.

5. What technological advancements are reshaping Intellectual Property law and how can clients benefit from them?

Technological advancements are significantly reshaping IP law worldwide, and Iran is no exception.

Blockchain technology is beginning to play a transformative role by providing tamper-proof records of ownership, creation, and transactions. This has implications for copyright registration, patent filings, and trademark authentication. Blockchain tools can be used to establish authorship through timestamping, automate licensing and royalty payments via smart contracts, and even combat counterfeiting by enabling the verification of genuine products throughout supply chains.

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are also reshaping IP law, particularly through the emergence of AI-generated works that raise new questions about authorship and patentability.

Emerging technologies such as 3D printing are also creating both risks and opportunities. On the one hand, 3D printing makes it easier to replicate patented products and industrial designs, raising concerns of potential infringement. On the other hand, it enables rapid prototyping, allowing inventors to test and refine their creations before pursuing patent protection, and it is increasingly paired with digital rights management solutions designed to prevent unauthorized replication.

The rise of big data is enhancing IP enforcement by helping to track large-scale violations such as online piracy and counterfeit sales. Cloud computing is changing the way trade secrets are managed. While storing sensitive information online raises security concerns, encrypted cloud solutions and secure collaboration platforms allow businesses to safeguard their IP and share documents safely with legal teams and partners.

Another important advancement is the growing adoption of digital IP registration systems. The Iranian IP Center is increasingly moving toward online filings for patents, trademarks, and industrial designs, in line with wider e-government initiatives. This shift allows for faster processing times, reduces paperwork, and provides easier access for businesses to manage their IP portfolios more efficiently.

Despite these opportunities, certain challenges remain in Iran, particularly restrictions linked to international sanctions that limit access to some global IP technologies, as well as the ongoing need for local laws to adapt to emerging issues such as AI, blockchain, and 3D printing. Many of these technological areas remain unregulated or are only weakly regulated under Iranian law, which creates uncertainty for businesses but also underscores the importance of adopting flexible, forward-looking IP strategies. Nevertheless, clients can benefit from adopting a proactive IP strategy aligned with early registration, monitoring, and enforcement. Working with local IP counsel can help businesses overcome these hurdles.

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