



# IRAN LIKELY TO BUY AIRBUS - ROUHANI

News / Airlines



**Iran** is reportedly planning to acquire an unspecified number of aircraft from **Airbus** Industrie (AIB, Toulouse Blagnac) the country's president Hassan Rouhani has said. Speaking to France 2 radio last week, Rouhani confirmed that following a landmark nuclear deal with the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, and Germany in July, extensive negotiations between the Iranians and various aircraft manufacturers have taken place.

"In the run-up to my visit there have been negotiations in the areas of transport, agriculture and also in the industrial field, especially in the auto sector, and I include air transport," he said. "Usually when conditions are right our buyers will buy from one or the other and probably it will be Airbus."

France's AFP news agency reports Rouhani was likely to have signed an undisclosed agreement with Airbus during a visit to France this week. However, following Friday's Islamist terrorist attacks in Paris which killed over 120 people, that visit has now been postponed indefinitely.

In September, Minister of Transport Abbas Akhoundi said Iran was negotiating with both Airbus and Boeing (BOE, Chicago O'Hare) to acquire aircraft either on lease or sale/leaseback terms by 2020. Though he gave no exact details, Tehran has in the past alluded to needing up to 400 aircraft to replace the country's ageing, outdated fleet.

Under sanctions since 1979, Iran has been forced to source aircraft from the black market with a number of high-profile transactions having taken place over the past six months.

In May, Mahan Air (W5, Tehran Mehrabad) acquired a fleet of seven ex-Virgin Atlantic (VS, London Heathrow) and Hi Fly Malta (5M, Malta) A340-600s as well as an ex-Virgin Atlantic A340-300 through its Iraqi proxy Al-Naser Airlines (NR, Baghdad) while in September, Meraj Air (JI, Tehran Mehrabad) acquired an ex-AirBlue (PA, Karachi Int'l) A340-300 for VIP government operations.

ch-aviation research shows that recently, A340-300 cn 117 and A330-200 cn 96 were ferried to the remote airfield of Karaj where they have now been placed into storage. As of this post, neither aircraft currently sports any discernible livery.

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