

Iran to partially allow BBC to report for a week

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Tehran: Iran will allow some BBC journalists to report there for a week's time, a government official said Tuesday, thus loosening restrictions on a news organization often vilified in local media amid signs of warming diplomatic ties to Britain.

The BBC said it had no word from the Iranian government on the decision, though one of its international correspondents has said she recently spent a day in Tehran. It also comes as Iran and world powers reached a permanent deal over its contested nuclear program.

Islamic Culture and Guidance Ministry spokesman Hossein Nooshabadi told The Associated Press that a team of BBC journalists will be allowed to report. He said the BBC's Persian-language service was still banned there.

"The permission is only for one week time for a special report," based on a BBC World Service request, Nooshabadi said. "The permission for activity and producing is for the report by the English-language BBC, while observing all laws and regulations" of the country.

Iran stopped the BBC's Persian service from operating in the country in 2009, later expelling a World Service journalist during turmoil surrounding its disputed 2009 presidential election. In the time since, Tehran repeatedly has accused the network of security-related offenses.

Local media occasionally calls the BBC the "propaganda apparatus of the old fox of colonialism."

The decision is likely part of attempts to normalize ties with Britain after hard-liners stormed its Tehran embassy and diplomatic sites in 2011. The United Kingdom closed its embassy over the attack.

Britain was part of the world powers that helped reach the nuclear deal with Iran in Vienna last month.

- AP