

118TH CONGRESS
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S. RES. 74

Condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 16, 2023

Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Mr. COONS, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

Whereas, in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2022, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i faith;

Whereas, since 1979, Iranian authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 Baha'is have been dismissed from government and university jobs;

Whereas, on December 15, 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/C.3/77/L.34) criticizing Iran for human rights abuses and calling on Iran to carry out wide-ranging reforms, including—

(1) to end its “continuing disregard for protections under Iranian law or internationally recognized safeguards relating to the imposition of the death penalty” and “to commute the sentences for child offenders on death row”;

(2) “to ensure, in law and in practice, that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment”;

(3) “to cease the widespread and systematic use of arbitrary arrests and detention”;

(4) “to release persons detained for the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms”;

(5) “to address the poor conditions of prisons”;

(6) “to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of systemic discrimination and other human rights violations against women and girls”;

(7) to cease “the increased harassment, intimidation, persecution, arbitrary arrest and detention of, and incitement to hatred that leads to violence against, persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities, including Christians (particularly converts from Islam), Gonabadi Dervishes, Jews, Sufi Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Yarsanis, Zoroastrians, and, in particular, Baha'is, who have been subjected to a sudden increase in persecution, who have faced increasing restrictions and

systemic persecution by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on account of their faith and have been reportedly subjected to mass arrests and lengthy prison sentences, as well as the arrest of prominent members and increased confiscation and destruction of property”;

and

(8) “to release all religious practitioners imprisoned for their membership in or activities on behalf of a minority religious group, to cease the desecration of cemeteries and to ensure that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief”;

Whereas, in the 2022 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom issued in April 2022, it is reported that—

(1) the Government of Iran “arrested scores of Baha’is across Iran”, many of whom “were held incommunicado or taken to undisclosed locations”;

(2) “Iranian universities continued to deny education to Baha’is on account of their faith”;

(3) government agents “closed six Baha’i businesses”;

(4) government officials “demolished the homes of three Baha’is without warning”; and

(5) the Government of Iran “announced the auction of thirteen Baha’i farms”;

Whereas the Iran section of the Department of State’s 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom issued in June 2022 provides, in part—

(1) “Authorities continued to confiscate Baha’i properties as part of an ongoing state-led campaign of economic persecution against Baha’is.”;

(2) “Authorities reportedly continued to deny the Baha’i, Sabeian-Mandaean, and Yarsani religious communities, as well as members of other unrecognized religious minorities, access to education and government employment unless they declared themselves as belonging to one of the country’s recognized religions on their application forms.”; and

(3) “Government officials continued to disseminate anti-Baha’i and antisemitic messages using traditional and social media.”;

Whereas, in response to a surge in persecution in June and July 2022, involving the subjection of over 100 Baha’is to arrests, arraignments, sentencing, and raids on their homes and businesses across Iran, including the sentencing in June of 26 individuals in the city of Shiraz to a combined total of 85 years in prison, the Department of State’s Office of International Religious Freedom issued a statement on August 2, 2022, indicating that “[a]mid a continued rise in arrests, sentences, and imprisonments, the U.S. urges Iran to halt its ongoing oppression of the Baha’i community and honor its international obligations to respect the right of all Iranians to freedom of religion or belief”;

Whereas, on November 21, 2022, Mahvash Sabet and Fariba Kamalabadi, 2 former members of the informal 7-person leadership group of the Baha’is of Iran, who each served 10-year sentences from 2008 to 2018 and have been detained since July 31, 2022, in Evin prison, were sentenced to 10 years in prison each after a summary trial lasting 1 hour;

Whereas, on December 11, 2022, the Baha’i International Community organization stated that “Dr. Shirin Ebadi,

the Nobel laureate and defence lawyer for Mahvash and Fariba during their first trial, said in 2008 that ‘not a shred of evidence’ was offered to prove the national security charges or other allegations. Nor was any new evidence forthcoming at this latest trial”;

Whereas, on December 11, 2022, the Baha’i International Community organization reported, “More than 320 Baha’is have been affected by individual acts of persecution since the arrest of Mahvash and Fariba. Dozens were arrested at various points in Shiraz, across Mazandaran province, and elsewhere throughout the country. Homes owned by Baha’is in the village of Roshankouh were demolished. Government plans to tar the Baha’is through hate speech and propaganda were also exposed. And at least 90 Baha’is are currently in prison or subject to degrading ankle-band monitoring.”;

Whereas Iran is a member of the United Nations and a signatory to both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among other international human rights treaties, without reservation;

Whereas section 105 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8514) authorizes the President to impose sanctions on individuals who are “responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Iran or their family members on or after June 12, 2009”; and

Whereas the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–158) amends and expands the authorities established under the Comprehensive Iran

Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–195) to sanction Iranian human rights abusers: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns the Government of Iran’s state-
3 sponsored persecution of the Baha’i minority in Iran
4 and the continued violation of the Universal Dec-
5 laration of Human Rights and the International
6 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

7 (2) calls on the Government of Iran—

8 (A) to immediately release the imprisoned
9 or detained Baha’is and all other prisoners held
10 solely on account of their religion;

11 (B) to end its state-sponsored campaign of
12 hate propaganda against the Baha’is; and

13 (C) to reverse state-imposed policies deny-
14 ing Baha’is and members of other religious mi-
15 norities equal opportunities to higher education,
16 earning a livelihood, due process under the law,
17 and the free exercise of religious practices;

18 (3) calls on the President and the Secretary of
19 State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to im-
20 mediately condemn the Government of Iran’s contin-
21 ued violation of human rights, and demand the im-
22 mediate release of prisoners held solely on account
23 of their religion; and

1 (4) urges the President and the Secretary of
2 State to utilize available authorities to impose sanc-
3 tions on officials of the Government of Iran and
4 other individuals directly responsible for serious
5 human rights abuses, including abuses against the
6 Baha'i community of Iran.

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