

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 694

Condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities in Iran and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 3, 2010

Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. KYL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. LIEBERMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities in Iran and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

Whereas Iran is a multicultural society comprised of Shia and Sunni Muslims, as well as Baha'is, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Persians, Azeris, Gilakis and Mazandarani, Kurds, Arabs, Lurs, Turkmen, Armenians, Balochis, Bakhtyaris, and others, and many of these communities have coexisted for thousands of years;

Whereas the Baha'i community is the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, whose teachings emphasize

multiculturalism, equality of men and women, interdependence, and humankind living in peace;

Whereas vast numbers of Iranians recognize the many contributions Baha'is have made to their society despite facing government-sponsored persecution;

Whereas, in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2006, 2008, and 2009, 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, according to the February 2010 United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of Iran, "The Secretary-General noted reports about Bahá'is subjected to arbitrary detention, false imprisonment, confiscation and destruction of property, citing a significant increase in violence targeting Bahá'is, including torture or ill-treatment in custody.";

Whereas, in August 2010, the seven former leaders of the Iranian Baha'i community were sentenced to a 20-year prison term, later reduced to a 10-year sentence, following over two years of arbitrary detention without trial;

Whereas numerous independent observers and legal experts, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, have raised serious questions about the lack of due process or fairness of their trial;

Whereas over 43 Baha'is continue to be imprisoned in Iran as of November 2010 solely because of their religious beliefs;

Whereas the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–195) calls on the President to impose “sanctions on certain persons who are responsible for or complicit in human rights abuses committed against citizens of Iran or their family members”;

Whereas, on March 15, 2010, Ms. Rozita Vaseghi was arrested and has since been held in solitary confinement at the detention center of the Ministry of Intelligence unit in Mashhad;

Whereas the seven leaders of the Baha’i community, Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Behrouz Tavakkoli, Saeid Rezaie, Vahid Tizfahm, and Mahvash Sabet, were arrested between March and May 2008 and have remained in detention;

Whereas, on June 14, 2010, the trial of these seven leaders concluded after four hearings and on June 30 the court issued a 20-year prison sentence for each which was subsequently verbally changed to a 10-year sentence;

Whereas, on October 12, 2009, Christian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani was arrested in northern Iran and faces a death sentence for apostasy after he questioned the Muslim monopoly on religious instruction his children were receiving in school;

Whereas, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of incidents of Iranian authorities raiding church services, detaining worshippers and church leaders, and harassing and threatening church members;

Whereas official policies promoting anti-Semitism have risen sharply in Iran, particularly since President Ahmadinejad came to power in 2005;

Whereas, on July 23, 2009, riot police and security forces injured and arrested 20 Sufi practitioners in Gonabad who then received sentences of flogging or imprisonment in May 2010;

Whereas, in January 2009, Jamshid Lak, a Sufi of the Gonabadi Dervish order, was flogged 74 times after being charged in 2006 with slander after reportedly publicly complaining of ill treatment by the Ministry of Intelligence;

Whereas, in July 2008, plain clothes security officers raided the home of Isfahan Iranian Christians Abbas Amiri and Sakineh Rahnama during a meeting, and both Amiri and Rahnama died of injuries suffered during the raid;

Whereas these individuals were targeted solely on the basis of their religion; and

Whereas the Government of Iran is party to the International Covenants on Human Rights: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns the Government of Iran for its
3 state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities in
4 Iran and its continued violation of the International
5 Covenants on Human Rights;

6 (2) calls on the Government of Iran to imme-
7 diately release the seven leaders of the Baha'i com-
8 munity and all other prisoners held solely on account
9 of their religion, including Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi,

1 Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr.
2 Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash
3 Sabet, Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, Ms. Raha Sabet, Mr.
4 Sasan Taqva, Ms. Haleh Roohi, and Ms Rozita
5 Vaseghi;

6 (3) calls on the President and Secretary of
7 State, in cooperation with the international commu-
8 nity, to continue to condemn the Government of
9 Iran's ongoing violation of human rights and de-
10 mand the immediate release of prisoners held solely
11 on account of their religion, including Mrs. Fariba
12 Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif
13 Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli,
14 Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, Ms. Raha
15 Sabet, Mr. Sasan Taqva, Ms. Haleh Roohi, and Ms
16 Rozita Vaseghi;

17 (4) urges the President and Secretary of State
18 to consider implementing further sanctions against
19 officials directly responsible for egregious human
20 rights violations, including against the Baha'is;

21 (5) calls on the United States Government to
22 continue to support an annual United Nations Gen-
23 eral Assembly resolution condemning severe viola-
24 tions of human rights, including freedom of religion
25 or belief, in Iran;

1 (6) calls on the United States Government to
2 press for a resolution condemning severe violations
3 of human rights in Iran, including freedom of reli-
4 gion or belief, at the United Nations General Assem-
5 bly and at the United Nations Human Rights Coun-
6 cil; and

7 (7) call on the United Nations Human Rights
8 Council to restore the position of United Nations
9 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights
10 in Iran with the task of investigating and reporting
11 on human rights abuses in Iran.

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