

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2023

Received; referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Condemning the Iranian regime’s human rights abuses against the brave women and men of Iran peacefully demonstrating in more than 133 cities.

Whereas, on September 16, 2022, 22-year-old Mahsa Amini passed away in the custody of Iranian “morality police” following a 3-day coma due to wounds, including bone fracture, hemorrhage, and cerebral edema consistent with severe beating, inflicted by the police for purportedly wearing a hijab improperly;

Whereas, on September 16, Iranians gathered in the streets of Tehran to protest the killing of Mahsa Amini;

Whereas demonstrations have since spread to more than 133 cities and 130 universities in Iran, where women are removing or burning hijabs, cutting their hair, and dancing in front of Iranian security forces, joined by their fellow Iranian citizens;

Whereas Iranian security forces have responded to such demonstrations with violence and detentions, including detentions of journalists and activists for covering the protests;

Whereas the security forces have reportedly killed more than 450 protestors, including at least 58 children; however, the number of injuries and deaths is likely higher but unobtainable due to internet blackouts;

Whereas at least 18,000 Iranians have been arrested across Iran according to official sources, and many thousands more have been detained according to independent reports;

Whereas videos, images, and demonstrations have spread to social media platforms and are an important way for the voices of the Iranian people to be heard;

Whereas internet monitoring groups have reported that the Iranian regime has—

- (1) caused near-total disruption of internet connectivity in parts of Iran and partial disruptions in city centers; and

- (2) blocked WhatsApp, Twitter, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, and video games with chat functions;

Whereas common protest chants include—

- (1) “Women, life, and freedom!”;

(2) “Iranians die but will not be suppressed!”; and

(3) “Death to the dictator Ayatollah Ali Khamenei!”;

Whereas the Iranian regime has a long history of structural and legal discrimination against women, including barriers for women seeking justice against domestic violence and criminal prohibitions against women singing or showing hair in public and studying certain technical subjects;

Whereas the Iranian regime approved of “depriving one social right or more” for any woman who posts an unveiled picture of herself on social media, and, in August 2022, approved of enforcing mandatory hijab laws through facial recognition;

Whereas, through misogynistic criminal statutes, the Iranian regime for decades has detained and engaged in the ongoing persecution of women, including—

(1) Saba Kord Afshari, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison for posting videos to social media without a hijab and transferred into Ward 6 of the notorious Qarchak Women’s Prison, identified by the Secretary of the Treasury for gross violations of human rights;

(2) Yasaman Aryani, her mother Monireh Arabshahi, and Mojgan Keshavarz, who were sentenced to serve five and a half years in prison for posting a video for International Women’s Day in 2019, during which they walked without headscarves through a metro train in Tehran, handing flowers to female passengers;

(3) human rights attorney Nasrin Sotoudeh, who was sentenced in 2019 to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes for providing legal defense services to women charged with not wearing a hijab;

(4) Narges Mohammadi, a prominent rights advocate, who—

(A) was arrested in November 2021 on the second anniversary of countrywide protests and is currently serving a 2-year sentence in prison;

(B) was handed a further sentence of 15 months imprisonment for “propaganda against the state”; and

(C) previously, had been sentenced to 10 years in prison in May 2015 for “establishing an illegal group”, “assembly and collusion to act against national security”, and “propaganda against the state”;

(5) former Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Shahindokht Molaverdi, who was charged with encouraging “corruption, prostitution, and sexual deviance”, a common charge against women refusing mandatory hijab laws, and sentenced in December 2020 to 30 months in prison for defending the right of women to attend sporting events and criticizing the practice of child marriage;

(6) six women who were sentenced by the Culture and Media Court of Tehran in July 2022 to each serve 1 year in prison for the offense of singing songs in public;

(7) Niloofar Hamed, one of the first Iranian journalists to report on Mahsa Amini’s death, who was arrested on September 22, 2022, and is being held in solitary confinement; and

(8) countless other women; and

Whereas peaceful protests in Iran over the last year have focused on grievances that include—

(1) mismanagement of the economy and national resources;

(2) prioritization of funding for terror groups and pariah regimes over social services for the people of Iran; and

(3) widespread political corruption: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) condemns—

4 (A) the brutal beating and death of Mahsa
5 Amini; and

6 (B) the violent suppression by the Iranian
7 regime of women and men participating in the
8 current demonstrations, including children, and
9 calls for transparent accountability for all
10 killings of protesters by Iranian security forces;

11 (2) supports the women and men of Iran who
12 are—

13 (A) participating in the current protests to
14 defend their fundamental human rights; and

15 (B) risking their safety to speak out
16 against the human rights abuses committed by
17 the Iranian regime;

18 (3) supports internet freedom programs that
19 circumvent the regime and provide support for
20 VPNs and other alternatives that can be used to by-

1 pass attempts by authoritarian governments to cen-
2 sor internet access during times of protest, and com-
3 mends private entities willing to provide programs to
4 circumvent such censorship;

5 (4) encourages continued efforts by the Biden
6 Administration to respond to the protests, including
7 the recent sanctioning of the Iranian morality police,
8 and further encourages the Biden Administration—

9 (A) to immediately impose, under existing
10 authorities, additional human rights sanctions
11 on officials and entities responsible for the re-
12 pression of the current protests;

13 (B) to prioritize efforts to expand unre-
14 stricted internet access in Iran, consistent with
15 existing law; and

16 (C) to work to develop a strategy to pre-
17 vent the Iranian regime from obtaining and ex-
18 ploiting facial recognition data and software for
19 the use of mass surveillance and enforcement of
20 mandatory hijab;

21 (5) encourages the private sector, following the
22 recent clarification by the Biden Administration of
23 sanctions exemptions on communications technology,
24 to work with the Biden Administration to ensure
25 protestors and activists have access to tools needed

