

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 599

Protecting the Iranian political refugees, including female former political prisoners, in Ashraf-3 in Albania.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 20, 2024

Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. COONS, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Protecting the Iranian political refugees, including female former political prisoners, in Ashraf-3 in Albania.

Whereas, since October 2023, the Iranian regime has increasingly acted as the epicenter of terrorism in the region, from supporting proxies that vehemently oppose peace in the Middle East, to threatening commercial shipping and free trade in the Red Sea and from targeting American forces in the region, to providing missile and drones to rogue actors, all of which pose serious risks to regional peace and security and endanger the vital interests of the United States;

Whereas Iran remains the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism today;

Whereas the Iranian people have rejected the regime ruling Iran through several rounds of major demonstrations, engulfing all 31 provinces of Iran calling for change;

Whereas the Iranian regime has resorted to killing, torture, sexual violence, and imprisonment of protesters, and several thousand protesters since 2017 have been killed, and many more have been imprisoned;

Whereas the Iranian regime has been intent on eliminating the Iranian political refugees who survived Tehran's repression and were first based in Camp Ashraf, Iraq, in the mid-1980s;

Whereas, starting in 2012, the United States Government and the United Nations initiated the relocation of nearly 3,000 Iranian dissidents from Camp Ashraf, Iraq, where they were repeatedly attacked by the Iranian regime's proxies, and facilitated their gradual relocation in 2013, 2014, and 2015 to Albania;

Whereas the relocation of these Iranian political refugees to Albania from Iraq was completed in September 2016, and the refugees, a third of them women, are now residing in Ashraf-3 near Tirana in Albania;

Whereas, on April 19, 2016, before the relocation of the majority of the residents to Albania, in a letter to a European Parliament Vice-President, the Prime Minister of Albania wrote, "Albania is fully engaged and committed to ensure for the Iranian refugees all rights stipulated in the Geneva Convention 1951, in the European Human Rights Convention and in the whole international legislation.";

Whereas over 900 women and men of Ashraf-3 are former political prisoners who endured torture while in prisons

and many of them are witnesses of the 1988 massacre of political prisoners and other political killings in Iran, among them eyewitnesses of crimes committed by Ebrahim Raisi;

Whereas these witnesses must be fully protected for potential testimonies before international courts investigating the 1988 massacre and other grave human rights violations in Iran;

Whereas, in November 2021, the Swedish Judiciary moved the whole court in Stockholm to Albania for two weeks to facilitate hearing testimonies of seven former Iranian political prisoners now residing in Ashraf-3, whose testimony was characterized as critical for a trial related to the 1988 massacre;

Whereas, in December 2023, a Swedish court confirmed the earlier ruling by the lower court of a life sentence for Hamid Noury, implicated in the 1988 massacre where he was an official in Gohardasht Prison;

Whereas the Iranian regime has stepped up terrorist attacks against its opponents and has used blackmail, terror threats, hostage-taking, sham judicial proceedings, and other means of intimidation against western nations to compel them to silence Iranian opponents living abroad;

Whereas, on several occasions, including in the last week of December 2023, the Iranian regime carried out large-scale cyberattacks against Albania to pressure the Government of Albania to undermine or end its hosting of Iranian political refugees;

Whereas experience has shown that any lack of decisiveness or concessions to Tehran only emboldens the Iranian regime for its destructive actions;

Whereas the Iranian regime has, over the past few months, stepped up threats against Ashraf-3, and given what the regime has done since October 7, 2023, far more vigilance on the part of the United States is required to ensure the complete protection and rights of Ashraf-3 residents in Albania;

Whereas, on December 12, 2023, the Iranian regime started sham trials in absentia for 104 veteran members of the Iranian Resistance, who, since years ago, have been primarily based in Europe, including in Albania, to create a phony legal precedent against them and secure their extradition to Iran by misusing INTERPOL Red Notices, impose limitations, or set the stage for terror attacks against them;

Whereas the Iranian regime is doing its utmost through any means to prevent Ashraf-3 residents from speaking up against the regime;

Whereas the leadership role of women in Ashraf-3 has doubly heightened the Iranian regime's misogynous hysteria against the political refugees in Ashraf-3;

Whereas over 3,600 parliamentarians around the world and 125 former world leaders have expressed their support for Mrs. Maryam Rajavi's Ten-Point Plan for the Future of Iran, which calls for the universal right to vote, free elections, a market economy, separation of religion and state, and advocates for gender, religious, and ethnic equality, a foreign policy based on peaceful coexistence, peace in the Middle East, and a nonnuclear republic Iran; and

Whereas, in sharp contrast to Iran's institutionalized misogyny, this Ten-Point platform has adequately addressed

women’s equality, including “complete gender equality in the realms of political, social, cultural and economic rights. An equal participation of women in political leadership, abolishment of any form of discrimination. The right to choose one’s own clothing freely, the right to freely marry and divorce, and to obtain education and employment. Prohibition of all forms of exploitation against women under any pretext.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) the Iranian political refugees in Ashraf-3,
3 in rejection of the Iranian regime’s demands, must
4 be afforded their fundamental rights of freedom of
5 expression and assembly and legal political activities
6 in Albania;

7 (2) the United States Government condemns
8 the Iranian regime’s threats and nefarious actions
9 against the Government of Albania, including
10 cyberattacks and threats against the Iranian dis-
11 sidents in Ashraf-3 in Albania;

12 (3) the United States Government should take
13 prompt and appropriate steps in accordance with
14 international law, including the Universal Declara-
15 tion of Human Rights, the International Covenant
16 on Civil and Political Rights, the European Conven-
17 tion on Human Rights, and the 1951 Convention
18 Relating to the Status of Refugees, to help the Gov-
19 ernment of Albania ensure and uphold all funda-

1 mental rights of Ashraf-3 residents within the
2 framework of the above conventions, including the
3 right to life, liberty, security, protection of property,
4 and freedom of expression and assembly;

5 (4) the United States Government strongly op-
6 poses Iran's misuse of the INTERPOL Red Notices
7 to impose restrictions or limitations or set in motion
8 the extradition of Iranian dissidents to Iran; and

9 (5) the United States Government must con-
10 tinue close and regular cooperation with the Govern-
11 ment of Albania and the residents of Ashraf-3 to
12 ensure the complete protection and fundamental
13 rights of Ashraf-3 residents.

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