

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

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, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. LANKFORD, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. BUTLER, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

DECEMBER 5, 2024

Committee discharged; considered and agreed to

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 June 18, 2023, marked the 40th anniversary of the execution of 10 Baha'i women by the Government of Iran, each witnessing the hanging of those hanged before her in a final failed attempt to induce abandonment of their faith after over 6 months of imprisonment and violent abuse, with the youngest only 17 years old;

Whereas, on December 19, 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/C.3/78/L.41) calling on Iran to carry out wide-ranging reforms and expressing serious concerns for its escalating human rights abuses, including—

(1) “severe limitations and increasing restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief”;

(2) “restrictions on the establishment of places of worship, undue restrictions on burials carried out in accordance with religious tenets, attacks against places of worship and burial”;

(3) “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”;

(4) “denial of and restrictions on access to education, including for members of the Baha’i faith”; and

(5) “particular” persecution of members of the Baha’i community “who have been subjected to a continued increase in persecution, including attacks, harassment and targeting . . . 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”;

Whereas, in the 2024 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom issued in May 2024, it is reported that in 2023—

(1) the Government of Iran “conducted individual and mass arrests of Baha’is across Iran taking them to undisclosed locations and imposing excessively long prison sentences”;

(2) “security officials beat and brutalized Baha’is during raids and searches of private homes”;

(3) “security forces arrested scores of Baha’is in cities including Hamadan, Mehrshahr, Yazd, Karaj, Alborz, and Tehran”;

(4) the “government has targeted Baha’i women in particular” and that “[a]pproximately two-thirds of Iranian Baha’i prisoners are women”;

(5) authorities “targeted Baha’i cemeteries in Arak, Alborz, and Golestan”; and

(6) local “municipalities seized and confiscated Baha’i land, restricted Baha’i access to burial grounds, and declared intentions to sell Baha’i-owned property exclusively to Muslims.”;

Whereas the Iran section of the Department of State’s 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom issued in May 2023 provides, in part—

(1) “[I]n July and August, security forces in cities across the country conducted multiple raids of Baha’i homes, confiscated property deemed ‘illegitimate wealth’, and arrested Baha’is in their homes or workplaces on unsubstantiated charges including ‘causing intellectual and ideological insecurity in Muslim society.’”;

(2) “Authorities reportedly continued to deny members of unrecognized religious minority groups access to education and government employment unless they declared themselves as belonging to one of the country’s recognized religions on their application forms. UN experts reported universities rejected more than 90 Baha’i students between January and August.”; and

(3) “Government officials and government-affiliated organizations 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 January 12, 2024, the Baha'i International Community organization reported increasing incidents of persecution accompanied by intensified violence perpetrated against the Baha'i community by the Government of Iran, for example—

(1) “since the beginning of October [2023] more than 200 incidents of persecution, including over 50 arrests and imprisonments, have occurred in various cities such as Shiraz, Yazd, Isfahan, Hamadan, and Karaj”;

(2) government agents have perpetrated “increasingly violent home raids, disproportionately affecting women and the elderly, and have even resulted in hospitalizations and traumatic separations of mothers from their children. Notably, over two-thirds of those arrested and detained have been women, predominantly in their twenties and thirties, highlighting the escalation of attacks against women in recent months.”; and

(3) government agents have instigated a “conspicuous rise in hate speech, where Baha’is have been accused of being behind the September 2022 protests, promoting permissiveness, being against Islam and Shiism, being spies for Israel and the West, and being part of a political movement that seeks to undermine the state”;

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-

1 laration of Human Rights and the International
2 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

3 (2) calls on the Government of Iran—

4 (A) to immediately release the imprisoned
5 or detained Baha'is and all other prisoners held
6 solely on account of their religion;

7 (B) to end its state-sponsored campaign of
8 hate propaganda against the Baha'is; and

9 (C) to reverse state-imposed policies deny-
10 ing Baha'is and members of other religious mi-
11 norities equal opportunities to higher education,
12 earning a livelihood, due process under the law,
13 and the free exercise of religious practices;

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

20 (4) urges the President and the Secretary of
21 State to utilize available authorities to impose sanc-
22 tions on officials of the Government of Iran and
23 other individuals directly responsible for serious

- 1 human rights abuses, including abuses against the
- 2 Baha'i community of Iran.

