

117TH CONGRESS
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H. RES. 744

Condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 25, 2021

Mr. DEUTCH (for himself, Mr. McCAUL, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2020, 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 have been dismissed from government and university jobs;

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/RES/75/191), dated December 16, 2020, expresses serious concerns about—

(1) “ongoing 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”;

(3) “undue restrictions on burials carried out in accordance with religious tenets”;

(4) “attacks against places of worship and burial”;
and

(5) “other human rights violations, including but not limited to harassment, intimidation, persecution, arbitrary arrests and detention, and incitement to hatred that leads to violence against persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities”;

Whereas, on January 29, 2020, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom “condemned an Iranian court order allowing authorities to confiscate properties owned by Baha'is in the village of Ivel in Mazandaran Province”;

Whereas in the 2020 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom issued in April 2021, it is reported that the Government of Iran—

(1) “continued to arrest Baha'is and impose lengthy prison sentences on them. Between 50 and 100 Baha'is

were reported to be in prisons in Iran during 2020, despite the widespread prevalence of COVID–19”; and

(2) “continued its systematic repression of Baha’is, including a mass raid on about 50 Baha’i houses in late November. A court official in Shiraz threatened to ‘up-root’ Baha’is in the city in late spring”;

Whereas the Iran section of the Department of State’s 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom issued in May 2021 provides, in part—

(1) “NGOs reported that as of October 27 [2020], there were 38 Baha’is – 16 men and 22 women – in prison.”;

(2) “The law bars Baha’is from founding or operating their own educational institutions. A Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology order requires universities to exclude Baha’is from access to higher education, or to expel them if their religious affiliation becomes known.”;

(3) “On November 1 [2020], Iran International and the international human rights news agency HRANA reported that authorities barred from higher education at least 17 Baha’is who participated in the year’s nationwide university entrance examinations, despite their being academically qualified.”;

(4) “In May [2020], parliament passed the legislation on ‘misguided sects’ in the form of amendments to articles 499 and 500 of the Islamic Penal Code. The legislation stated that those found guilty of ‘deviant psychological manipulation’ or ‘propaganda contrary to Islam’ could be labeled as members of a ‘sect’ and punished with imprisonment, flogging, fines, or the death penalty. A human rights lawyer living in Europe stated, ‘The law should protect citizens, including Christian converts and

Baha'is, against the government, but in Iran the law has become a tool to justify the government's violent treatment of converts and other unrecognized minorities.'"; and

(5) "The government bars Baha'is from all government employment and forbids Baha'i participation in the governmental social pension system. Baha'is may not receive compensation for injury or crimes committed against them and may not inherit property. A religious fatwa from the Supreme Leader encourages citizens to avoid all dealings with Baha'is.";

Whereas, on April 9, 2021, the U.S. Department of State Office of Religious Freedom tweeted, "We are concerned by amendments to Articles 499 & 500 of Iran's penal code, which may lead to more prosecutions of individuals for exercising their freedoms of religion, belief & expression. We call on Iran to uphold these human rights for all, including religious minorities.";

Whereas the Baha'i International Community documented a more than 50 percent increase in hate propaganda directed against the Baha'is in the 12-month period ending in August 2020 compared to prior years, with more than 9,500 such articles, videos, or web pages appearing in Iranian government-controlled or government-sponsored media;

Whereas, on March 10, 2021, the Baha'i International Community condemned "an official Iranian directive which instructs local authorities in the city of Sari, in the northern province of Mazandaran, to 'conduct strict controls' on the Baha'is in the city by 'monitoring their operations', and introduce measures to 'identify Baha'i students' in order to 'bring them into Islam'";

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 House of Representatives—

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

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

3 (C) to reverse state-imposed policies deny-
4 ing Baha'is and members of other religious mi-
5 norities equal opportunities to higher education,
6 earning a livelihood, due process under the law,
7 and the free exercise of religious practices;

8 (3) calls on the President and the Secretary of
9 State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to im-
10 mediately condemn the Government of Iran's contin-
11 ued violation of human rights, and demand the im-
12 mediate release of prisoners held solely on account
13 of their religion; and

14 (4) urges the President and the Secretary of
15 State to utilize available authorities to impose sanc-
16 tions on officials of the Government of Iran and
17 other individuals directly responsible for serious
18 human rights abuses, including abuses against the
19 Baha'i community of Iran.

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