

Calendar No. 153

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 2

Commending the bravery, courage, and resolve of the women and men of Iran demonstrating in more than 133 cities and risking their safety to speak out against the Iranian regime's human rights abuses.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2023

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. COONS, Mr. RISCH, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KELLY, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. BRITT, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WELCH, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SMITH, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. WARNOCK) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

JULY 25, 2023

Reported by Mr. MENENDEZ, without amendment, and an amendment to the preamble, and with an amendment to the title

[Strike the preamble and insert the part printed in *italic*]

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Commending the bravery, courage, and resolve of the women and men of Iran demonstrating in more than 133 cities

and risking their safety to speak out against the Iranian regime's human rights abuses.

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, 2022, 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, in a call to end the Iranian regime's systemic repression;

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 reportedly have killed more than 516 protestors, including at least 70 children, although the number of injuries and deaths is likely higher, but is unobtainable due to internet blackouts;

Whereas at least 19,200 Iranians have been arrested across Iran according to official sources, and many thousands more have been detained according to independent reports;

Whereas more than 60 percent of Iran's population is younger than 30 years old, and the protests continue to be fueled by young people;

Whereas Iran’s Revolutionary Courts have executed at least 4 individuals who were involved in the protests, namely Mohsen Shekari, Majid Reza Rahnavard, Mohammad Mehdi Karami, and Sayed Mohammad Hosseini, and have charged at least 100 more individuals with crimes that are punishable in Iran by death;

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, ap-

proved 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 Qarehvak Women’s Prison, which the Secretary of the Treasury has identified as a place at which gross violations of human rights take place;

(2) Raheleh Ahmadi, mother of Afshari, who was sentenced to 2 years in prison for advocacy on behalf of Afshari;

(3) Yasaman Aryani, her mother Monireh Arabshahi, and Mojgan Keshavarz, who were sentenced to between 16 and 23 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;

(4) 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;

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

(A) was 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”;

(B) was arrested in November 2019 (on the second anniversary of countrywide protests) and re-arrested in 2021; and

(C) had her prison sentence extended in October 2022 to 11 years and 9 months;

(6) 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;

(7) 6 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;

(8) Niloufar Hamedei, who was 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

(9) countless other women;

Whereas the Iranian regime consistently commits a range of human rights abuses in addition to its systematic persecution of women and peaceful protesters, including—

(1) unlawful or arbitrary killings and torture;

(2) trials without due process;

(3) forced disappearances;

(4) arbitrary arrest and detention;

(5) life-threatening prison conditions;

(6) transnational attacks against dissidents; and

(7) severe restrictions on free expression and the media, peaceful assembly and association, and religious freedom;

Whereas Freedom House ranks the Government of Iran as one of the worst human rights violators in the world;

with a Global Freedom Score of 14 out of 100 and an Internet Freedom Score of 16 out of 100;

Whereas peaceful protests in Iran during 2022 have focused on grievances such as—

(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

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, 2022, Iranians gathered in the streets of Tehran to protest the killing of Mahsa Amini;

Whereas demonstrations have since spread to more than 165 cities and 144 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, in a call to end the Iranian regime’s systemic repression;

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 reportedly have killed at least 573 protestors, including at least 71 children and 48 women,

although the number of injuries and deaths is likely higher, but is unobtainable due to internet blackouts;

Whereas at least 19,763 Iranians have been arrested across Iran according to official sources, and many thousands more have been detained according to independent reports;

Whereas more than 60 percent of Iran's population is younger than 30 years old, and the protests continue to be fueled by young people;

Whereas Iran's Revolutionary Courts have executed at least 7 individuals who were involved in the protests, namely Mohsen Shekari, Majid Reza Rahnavard, Mohammad Mehdi Karami, Sayed Mohammad Hosseini, Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi, and Saeed Yaqoubi, and have charged at least 100 more individuals with crimes that are punishable in Iran by death;

Whereas security forces have used rubber bullets on protesters, which have blinded many people;

Whereas thousands of young female students across dozens of provinces and hundreds of schools have been the targets of what appears to be organized poisonings;

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, which the Secretary of the Treasury has identified as a place at which gross violations of human rights take place;

(2) Raheleh Ahmadi, mother of Afshari, who was sentenced to 2 years in prison for advocacy on behalf of Afshari;

(3) Yasaman Aryani, her mother Monireh Arabshahi, and Mojgan Keshavarz, who were sentenced to between 16 and 23 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;

(4) *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;*

(5) *Narges Mohammadi, a prominent rights advocate, who—*

(A) was 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”;

(B) was arrested in November 2019 (on the second anniversary of countrywide protests) and re-arrested in 2021; and

(C) had her prison sentence extended in October 2022 to 11 years and 9 months;

(6) *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;*

(7) *6 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;*

(8) *Niloufar Hamed, who was 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*

(9) *countless other women;*

Whereas the Iranian regime consistently commits a range of human rights abuses in addition to its systematic persecution of women and peaceful protesters, including—

- (1) *unlawful or arbitrary killings and torture;*
- (2) *trials without due process;*
- (3) *forced disappearances;*
- (4) *arbitrary arrest and detention;*
- (5) *life-threatening prison conditions;*
- (6) *transnational attacks against dissidents; and*
- (7) *severe restrictions on free expression and the media, peaceful assembly and association, and religious freedom;*

Whereas Freedom House ranks the Government of Iran as one of the worst human rights violators in the world, with a Global Freedom Score of 14 out of 100 and an Internet Freedom Score of 16 out of 100;

Whereas peaceful protests in Iran during 2022 have focused on grievances such as—

- (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 Senate (the House of Representatives*
 2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) *commends the bravery, courage, and resolve*
 4 *of the women and men of Iran who are—*

5 (A) *participating in the current protests to*
 6 *defend their fundamental human rights; and*

1 (B) risking their safety to speak out
2 against the human rights abuses committed by
3 the Iranian regime;

4 (2) condemns—

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

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

12 (3) supports internet freedom programs that
13 circumvent the regime, including the Open Tech-
14 nology Fund, which provides support for VPNs,
15 proxy servers, and other alternatives that can be
16 used to bypass attempts by authoritarian govern-
17 ments to censor internet access during times of pro-
18 test, and commends private entities willing to pro-
19 vide programs to circumvent such censorship;

20 (4) encourages continued efforts by the Biden
21 Administration to respond to the protests, including
22 the recent sanctioning of the Iranian morality police,
23 and further encourages the Biden Administration—

24 (A) to immediately impose, under existing
25 authorities, additional human rights sanctions

1 on officials and entities responsible for the re-
2 pression of the current protests;

3 (B) to prioritize efforts to expand unre-
4 stricted internet access in Iran, consistent with
5 existing law; and

6 (C) to work to develop a strategy to pre-
7 vent the Iranian regime from obtaining and ex-
8 ploiting facial recognition data and software for
9 the use of mass surveillance and enforcement of
10 mandatory hijab;

11 (5) encourages the private sector, following the
12 recent clarification by the Biden Administration of
13 sanctions exemptions on communications technology,
14 to work with the Biden Administration to ensure
15 protestors and activists have access to tools needed
16 to circumvent government surveillance and repres-
17 sion;

18 (6) encourages representatives of the private
19 sector to coordinate with the Department of the
20 Treasury and their subsidiaries to utilize licensing
21 opportunities and expand access of key communica-
22 tions services to Iranians residing within Iran;

23 (7) welcomes the efforts of the international
24 community to support protestors in Iran, including

1 by removing Iran from the United Nations Commis-
2 sion on the Status of Women; and

3 (8) calls on the international community—

4 (A) to publicly condemn violence by the
5 Iranian regime against peaceful protesters;

6 (B) to speak out against violations by the
7 regime of fundamental human rights, including
8 the freedom of expression, assembly, and re-
9 dress of grievances of the Iranian people; and

10 (C) impose human rights sanctions on offi-
11 cials and entities that are responsible for the re-
12 pression of current protests and involved in vio-
13 lating the human rights of the Iranian people.

Amend the title so as to read: “A concurrent resolu-
tion commending the bravery, courage, and resolve of the
women and men of Iran demonstrating in more than 165
cities and risking their safety to speak out against the
Iranian regime’s human rights abuses.’”.

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