

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. CON. RES. _____

Commending the bravery, courage, and resolve of the women and men of Iran demonstrating in more than 80 cities and risking their safety to speak out against the Iranian regime’s human rights abuses.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Commending the bravery, courage, and resolve of the women and men of Iran demonstrating in more than 80 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 17, Iranians gathered in the streets of Tehran to protest the killing of Mahsa Amini;

Whereas demonstrations have since spread to more than 80 cities and 20 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 killed a reported 76 protestors, including at least 4 children; however, the number of injuries and deaths is likely higher but unobtainable due to internet blackouts;

Whereas at least 1,200 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) 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 arrested in November 2019 on the second anniversary of countrywide protests and is currently serving a 2-year sentence in prison; and

(B) 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”;

(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) 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;

(8) Niloufar Hamedei, 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; 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 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

7 (B) risking their safety to speak out
8 against the human rights abuses committed by
9 the Iranian regime;

10 (2) condemns—

11 (A) the brutal beating and death of Mahsa
12 Amini; and

13 (B) the violent suppression by the Iranian
14 regime of women and men participating in the
15 current demonstrations, including children, and
16 calls for transparent accountability for all
17 killings of protesters by Iranian security forces;

18 (3) supports internet freedom programs that
19 circumvent the regime, including the Open Tech-
20 nology Fund, which provides support for VPNs and
21 other alternatives that can be used to bypass at-

1 tempts by authoritarian governments to censor inter-
2 net access during times of protest, and commends
3 private entities willing to provide programs to cir-
4 cumvent 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; and

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

1 to circumvent government surveillance and repres-
2 sion; and

3 (6) welcomes the efforts of the international
4 community to support protestors in Iran, and calls
5 on the international community—

6 (A) to publicly condemn violence by the
7 Iranian regime against peaceful protesters;

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

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