

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. CON. RES. 57

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 2000

Referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Concerning the emancipation of the Iranian Baha'i  
community.

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, and 1996, Congress, by concurrent resolution, declared that it holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all its nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith, Iran's largest religious minority;

Whereas Congress has deplored the Government of Iran's religious persecution of the Baha'i community in such resolutions and in numerous other appeals, and has condemned Iran's execution of more than 200 Baha'is and the imprisonment of thousands of others solely on account of their religious beliefs;

Whereas in July 1998 a Baha'i, Mr. Ruhollah Rowhani, was executed by hanging in Mashhad after being held in solitary confinement for 9 months on the charge of converting a Muslim woman to the Baha'i Faith, a charge the woman herself refuted;

Whereas 4 Baha'is remain on death row in Iran, 2 on charges on apostasy, and 11 others are serving prison terms on charges arising solely from their religious beliefs or activities;

Whereas the Government of Iran continues to deny individual Baha'is access to higher education and government employment and denies recognition and religious rights to the Baha'i community, according to the policy set forth in a confidential Iranian Government document which was revealed by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1993;

Whereas Baha'is have been banned from teaching and studying at Iranian universities since the Islamic Revolution and therefore created the Baha'i Institute of Higher Education, or Baha'i Open University, to provide educational opportunities to Baha'i youth using volunteer faculty and a network of classrooms, libraries, and laboratories in private homes and buildings throughout Iran;

Whereas in September and October 1998, Iranian authorities arrested 36 faculty members of the Open University, 4 of whom have been given prison sentences ranging between 3 to 10 years, even though the law makes no mention of religious instruction within one's own religious community as being an illegal activity;

Whereas Iranian intelligence officers looted classroom equipment, textbooks, computers, and other personal property from 532 Baha'i homes in an attempt to close down the Open University;

Whereas all Baha'i community properties in Iran have been confiscated by the government, and Iranian Baha'is are not permitted to elect their leaders, organize as a com-

munity, operate religious schools, or conduct other religious community activities guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Whereas on February 22, 1993, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights published a formerly confidential Iranian government document that constitutes a blueprint for the destruction of the Baha'i community and reveals that these repressive actions are the result of a deliberate policy designed and approved by the highest officials of the Government of Iran; and

Whereas in 1998 the United Nations Special Representative for Human Rights, Maurice Copithorne, was denied entry into Iran: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*  
2        *concurring), That Congress—*

3            (1) continues to hold the Government of Iran  
4        responsible for upholding the rights of all its nation-  
5        als, including members of the Baha'i community, in  
6        a manner consistent with Iran's obligations under  
7        the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and  
8        other international agreements guaranteeing the civil  
9        and political rights of its citizens;

10           (2) condemns the repressive anti-Baha'i policies  
11        and actions of the Government of Iran, including the  
12        denial of legal recognition to the Baha'i community  
13        and the basic rights to organize, elect its leaders,  
14        educate its youth, and conduct the normal activities  
15        of a law-abiding religious community;

1           (3) expresses concern that individual Baha'is  
2           continue to suffer from severely repressive and dis-  
3           criminatory government actions, including executions  
4           and death sentences, solely on account of their reli-  
5           gion;

6           (4) urges the Government of Iran to permit  
7           Baha'i students to attend Iranian universities and  
8           Baha'i faculty to teach at Iranian universities, to re-  
9           turn the property confiscated from the Baha'i Open  
10          University, to free the imprisoned faculty members  
11          of the Open University, and to permit the Open Uni-  
12          versity to continue to function;

13          (5) urges the Government of Iran to implement  
14          fully the conclusions and recommendations on the  
15          emancipation of the Iranian Baha'i community made  
16          by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Reli-  
17          gious Intolerance, Professor Abdelfattah Amor, in  
18          his report of March 1996 to the United Nations  
19          Commission of Human Rights;

20          (6) urges the Government of Iran to extend to  
21          the Baha'i community the rights guaranteed by the  
22          Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the  
23          international covenants of human rights, including  
24          the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and  
25          equal protection of the law; and

1 (7) calls upon the President to continue—

2 (A) to assert the United States Govern-  
3 ment's concern regarding Iran's violations of  
4 the rights of its citizens, including members of  
5 the Baha'i community, along with expressions  
6 of its concern regarding the Iranian Govern-  
7 ment's support for international terrorism and  
8 its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruc-  
9 tion;

10 (B) to emphasize that the United States  
11 regards the human rights practices of the Gov-  
12 ernment of Iran, particularly its treatment of  
13 the Baha'i community and other religious mi-  
14 norities, as a significant factor in the develop-  
15 ment of the United States Government's rela-  
16 tions with the Government of Iran;

17 (C) to emphasize the need for the United  
18 Nations Special Representative for Human  
19 Rights to be granted permission to enter Iran;

20 (D) to urge the Government of Iran to  
21 emancipate the Baha'i community by granting  
22 those rights guaranteed by the Universal Dec-  
23 laration of Human Rights and the international  
24 covenants on human rights; and

1           (E) to encourage other governments to  
2           continue to appeal to the Government of Iran,  
3           and to cooperate with other governments and  
4           international organizations, including the  
5           United Nations and its agencies, in efforts to  
6           protect the religious rights of the Baha'is and  
7           other minorities through joint appeals to the  
8           Government of Iran and through other appro-  
9           priate actions.

Passed the Senate July 19, 2000.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,  
*Secretary.*