

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 2000, Congress, by concurrent resolution, declared that it holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Bahá'í Faith;

Whereas in those resolutions and in numerous other appeals, Congress has deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Bahá'í community and has condemned the execution by Iran of more than 200 Bahá'ís and the disruptive imprisonment of thousands of others solely on account of their religious beliefs;

Whereas Iranian Bahá'ís are not permitted to elect their leaders, assemble or organize as a community, operate religious schools, or conduct other religious community activities that are guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1984;

Whereas the continued denial of Bahá'í property rights by the Iranian Government is demonstrated by the confiscation by the Iranian Government of a multitude of Bahá'í community and private properties;

Whereas Iranian authorities destroyed a Bahá'í holy site, the tomb of Quddus, in February 2004, and the historic house of the father of the founder of the Bahá'í faith in June 2004, marking the first time in 25 years that Bahá'í sites have been destroyed;

Whereas the Government of Iran continues to deny individual Bahá'ís access to higher education and government employment, in addition to denying recognition and religious rights to the Bahá'í community;

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

Whereas in September and October of 1998, officers of the Ministry of Information, the intelligence agency of the Iranian Government, arrested 36 faculty members of the Open University;

Whereas on July 19, 2002, Iranian Revolutionary Guards systematically disrupted student qualifying examinations for the Open University in 9 different districts by videotaping the proceedings, questioning the students, and confiscating examination papers and Bahá'í books;

Whereas the use of arbitrary arrests, suspended sentences, and short-term detentions against the Iranian Bahá'ís have become widespread;

Whereas as of November 2004, one Bahá'í remains in an Iranian prison for converting from Islam to the Bahá'í faith in 1995;

Whereas on October 10, 2003, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2003 to Shirin Ebadi for her efforts involving democracy and human rights, including advocating equal rights for the Bahá'í community in Iran;

Whereas the conclusions contained in the report of October 13, 2003, by the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the European Union, conveyed the continuing concern of the European Union about the violations of the Bahá'ís' right to freedom of religion, and urged the Iranian Government to comply with both the recommendations made in June 2003 by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and with the recommendations made in August 2003 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning injustice, particularly in relation to education, property rights, and employment; and

Whereas in the 2003 General Affairs and External Relations Council report, the European Union urged the Government of Iran to expedite reform on many fronts, while recognizing the meetings held in 2003 and the planned meetings that have been welcomed by the Government of Iran, to be an important step toward progress: 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 all the rights of its nation-
- 5 als, including members of the Bahá'í community, in
- 6 a manner consistent with Iran's obligations under

1 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted
2 and proclaimed by the United Nations General As-
3 sembly Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10,
4 1984, and other international agreements guaran-
5 teeing the civil and political rights of Iranian citi-
6 zens;

7 (2) condemns the repressive anti-Bahá'í policies
8 and actions of the Government of Iran, including the
9 denial of legal recognition to the Bahá'í community
10 and the basic rights to organize, elect leaders, edu-
11 cate youth, and conduct the normal activities of a
12 law-abiding religious community;

13 (3) expresses concern that individual Bahá'ís
14 continue to suffer from severely repressive and dis-
15 criminatory government actions, solely on account of
16 their religion;

17 (4) urges the Government of Iran to permit
18 Bahá'í students to attend Iranian universities and
19 Bahá'í faculty to teach at Iranian universities, to re-
20 turn the property confiscated from the Bahá'í Open
21 University, and to permit the Open University to
22 continue to function;

23 (5) urges the Government of Iran to implement
24 fully the conclusions and recommendations on the
25 emancipation of the Iranian Bahá'í community made

1 by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary
2 Detention and also to comply with the recommendations
3 made in August 2003 by the Committee on the
4 Elimination of Racial Discrimination;

5 (6) urges the Government of Iran to extend to
6 the Bahá'í community the rights guaranteed by the
7 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted
8 and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly
9 Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1984, and other international covenants of human
10 rights, including the freedoms of thought, conscience, and religion, and equal protection of the
11 law;

12 (7) calls upon the President to continue to—

13 (A) assert the concerns of the United States Government regarding violations by the
14 Iranian Government of the rights of Iranian citizens, including members of the Bahá'í community;

15 (B) emphasize that the United States regards the human rights practices of the Government of Iran, including its treatment of the Bahá'í community and other religious minorities, as a significant factor in the development

1 of relations between the United States and
2 Iran;

3 (C) urge the Government of Iran to eman-
4 cipate the Bahá'í community by granting those
5 rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration
6 of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by
7 the United Nations General Assembly Resolu-
8 tion 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1984, and
9 other international covenants on human rights;
10 and

11 (D) cooperate with international organiza-
12 tions, including the United Nations and its
13 agencies, in efforts to protect the religious
14 rights of the Bahá'ís and other minorities
15 through joint appeals to the Government of
16 Iran; and

17 (8) calls upon the President to—

18 (A) initiate an active and consistent dia-
19 logue with other governments who are influen-
20 tial with Iran in order to persuade the Govern-
21 ment of Iran to rectify its human rights prac-
22 tices; and

1 (B) urge the European Union to use its re-
2 lationship with Iran to address and advance
3 these fundamental human rights issues.

Passed the Senate December 7, 2004.

Attest:

Secretary.

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 78

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Condemning the repression of the Iranian Bahá'í community and calling for the emancipation of Iranian Bahá'ís.