

CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 345, S. Res. 80.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 80) condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of the Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

AMENDMENT NO. 1999

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Paul amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to and that the Senate proceed immediately to a voice vote on adoption of the resolution, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 1999) was agreed to, as follows:

On page 5, line 4, strike the words "all available".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution, as amended.

The resolution (S. Res. 80), as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and that any related statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble reads as follows:

S. RES. 80

Whereas, in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2006, 2008, and 2009, 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 the 2010 Department of State International Religious Freedom Report stated, "Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, more than 200 Baha'is have been killed, and many have faced regular raids and confiscation of property.";

Whereas the 2009 Department of State Human Rights Report stated, "The government [of Iran] continued to repress Baha'is and prevent them from meeting in homes to worship. It banned them from government and military leadership posts, the social pension system, and public schools and universities unless they concealed their faith.";

Whereas, on October 15, 2010, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a special report on human rights in Iran, stating that "the Baha'i, who comprise the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority, face multiple forms of discrimination and harassment, including denial of employment, Government benefits and access to higher education";

Whereas, on December 21, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/65/226) noting "serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations" in Iran, including against the Baha'i community;

Whereas, in November 2007, the Ministry of Information of Iran in Shiraz jailed Baha'is Ms. Raha Sabet, 33, Mr. Sasan Taqva, 32, and Ms. Haleh Roohi, 29, for educating underprivileged children, and gave them 4-year prison terms;

Whereas Ms. Sabet remains imprisoned in Iran;

Whereas Ms. Sabet, Mr. Taqva, and Ms. Roohi were targeted solely on the basis of their religion;

Whereas, in March and May of 2008, intelligence officials of the Government of Iran in Mashhad and Tehran arrested and imprisoned Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, the members of the coordinating group for the Baha'i community in Iran;

Whereas, in August 2010, the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced the 7 Baha'i leaders to 20-year prison terms on charges of "spying for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, propaganda against the regime and spreading corruption on earth";

Whereas the lawyer for these 7 leaders, Mrs. Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Laureate, has been denied all access to the prisoners and their files;

Whereas these 7 Baha'i leaders were targeted solely on the basis of their religion;

Whereas, in February 2011, the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced human rights activist and follower of the Baha'i faith, Navid Khanjani, to a 12-year prison term on charges of "propaganda against the regime by publishing news, reports, and interviews with foreign TV and radio," among others;

Whereas the Government of Iran is party to the International Covenants on Human Rights; and

Whereas the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-195) authorizes the President and the Secretary of State to impose sanctions on "the officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals who are responsible for continuing and severe violations of human rights and religious freedom in Iran": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran to immediately release the seven leaders and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion, including Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, Ms. Raha Sabet, and Mr. Navid Khanjani;

(3) calls on the President and Secretary of State, in cooperation with the international community, to immediately condemn the Government of Iran's continued violation of human rights and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion, including Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, Ms. Raha Sabet, and Mr. Navid Khanjani; and

(4) urges the President and Secretary of State to utilize measures, such as those available under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment

Act of 2010 and Executive Order 13553, to sanction officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for egregious human rights violations in Iran, including against the Baha'i community.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF TIBET

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 347, S. Res. 356.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 356) expressing support for the people of Tibet.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations without amendment and an amendment to the preamble, as follows:

[Omit the part printed in boldface brackets and insert the part printed in Italic.]

S. RES. 356

Whereas Tibet is the center of Tibetan Buddhism, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the most revered figure in Tibetan Buddhism;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China continues to enforce policies that infringe on fundamental freedoms of Tibetans, including punitive security measures against monasteries, mass arrests, and restrictions on freedom to practice religion;

Whereas both the Dalai Lama and the Kalon Tripa, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister democratically elected by the Tibetan exile community, have specifically stated that they do not seek independence for Tibet from China;

Whereas, in his inaugural address on August 8, 2011, Kalon Tripa Sangay stated that he will "continue the Middle-Way policy, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet within the People's Republic of China";

Whereas, according to the Department of State's 2011 Report on Tibet Negotiations, since 2002, nine rounds of talks between the Government of the People's Republic of China and envoys of the Dalai Lama "have not borne concrete results";

Whereas, despite persistent efforts by the Dalai Lama and his representatives, the Government of the People's Republic of China and envoys of the Dalai Lama have not held any formal dialogue since January 2010;

[Whereas, since March 2011, at least 16 Tibetans have set themselves on fire, and at least 12 have died;]

Whereas, since March 2011, more than two dozen Tibetans have set themselves on fire, and at least 19 have died;

Whereas the repressive policies of the Government of the People's Republic of China have created an environment of despair, hopelessness, and frustration among many Tibetans;

Whereas, on November 1, 2011, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, expressed concern over "restrictive measures" implemented by the Government of the People's Republic of China in Tibetan monasteries, stating that such measures "not only curtail the right to freedom of religion or belief, but further exacerbate the existing tensions, and are counterproductive" and affirming that "the right of members of the

monastic community, and the wider community to freely practice their religion, should be fully respected and guaranteed by the Chinese Government”;

Whereas, on January 24, 2012, Maria Otero, Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, and United States Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, issued a statement expressing concern about “reports of violence and continuing heightened tensions in Tibetan areas of China, including reports of security forces in Sichuan province opening fire on protesters, killing some and injuring others”;

Whereas the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China guarantees freedom of religious belief for all citizens, but the July-December 2010 International Religious Freedom Report of the Department of State states that “the [Chinese] government’s repression of religious freedom remained severe in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas”;

Whereas, on March 10, 2011, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced that he would relinquish his last remaining governmental duties in the Central Tibetan Administration, and would turn over political authority to the leadership democratically elected by Tibetans in exile;

Whereas, on March 20, 2011, the Tibetan government in exile conducted competitive democratic elections that were monitored by international observers and deemed free, fair, and consistent with international standards;

Whereas nearly 50,000 people in over 30 countries, more than half of all the eligible Tibetan exiles voters, participated in the March 20, 2011, elections;

Whereas Dr. Lobsang Sangay was elected Kalon Tripa, or prime minister, of the Central Tibetan Administration after receiving 55 percent of votes in the March 20, 2011, election and was inaugurated on August 8, 2011;

Whereas Kalon Tripa Sangay was selected to study in the United States under the Department of State’s Tibetan Scholarship Program, earning a doctorate in law from Harvard University, and served as a Senior Fellow at the East Asian Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School;

Whereas Kalon Tripa Sangay, while at Harvard University, promoted dialogue among Tibetan exiles and Chinese students and visiting Chinese scholars to enhance mutual understanding and advance the prospects for reconciliation; and

Whereas it is the objective of the United States Government, consistent across administrations of different political parties and as articulated in the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (subtitle B of title VI of Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901 note) to promote a substantive dialogue between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives in order to secure genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within China:

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a vote on this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (No. 356) was agreed to.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and any statements relating

to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 356

Whereas Tibet is the center of Tibetan Buddhism, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the most revered figure in Tibetan Buddhism;

Whereas the Government of the People’s Republic of China continues to enforce policies that infringe on fundamental freedoms of Tibetans, including punitive security measures against monasteries, mass arrests, and restrictions on freedom to practice religion;

Whereas both the Dalai Lama and the Kalon Tripa, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister democratically elected by the Tibetan exile community, have specifically stated that they do not seek independence for Tibet from China;

Whereas, in his inaugural address on August 8, 2011, Kalon Tripa Sangay stated that he will “continue the Middle-Way policy, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet within the People’s Republic of China”;

Whereas according to the Department of State’s 2011 Report on Tibet Negotiations, since 2002, nine rounds of talks between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and envoys of the Dalai Lama “have not borne concrete results”;

Whereas despite persistent efforts by the Dalai Lama and his representatives, the Government of the People’s Republic of China and envoys of the Dalai Lama have not held any formal dialogue since January 2010;

Whereas, since March 2011, more than two dozen Tibetans have set themselves on fire, and at least 19 have died;

Whereas the repressive policies of the Government of the People’s Republic of China have created an environment of despair, hopelessness, and frustration among many Tibetans;

Whereas, on November 1, 2011, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, expressed concern over “restrictive measures” implemented by the Government of the People’s Republic of China in Tibetan monasteries, stating that such measures “not only curtail the right to freedom of religion or belief, but further exacerbate the existing tensions, and are counterproductive” and affirming that “the right of members of the monastic community, and the wider community to freely practice their religion, should be fully respected and guaranteed by the Chinese Government”;

Whereas, on January 24, 2012, Maria Otero, Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, and United States Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, issued a statement expressing concern about “reports of violence and continuing heightened tensions in Tibetan areas of China, including reports of security forces in Sichuan province opening fire on protesters, killing some and injuring others”;

Whereas the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China guarantees freedom of religious belief for all citizens, but the July-December 2010 International Religious Freedom Report of the Department of State states that “the [Chinese] government’s repression of religious freedom remained severe in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas”;

Whereas, on March 10, 2011, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced that he would re-

linquish his last remaining governmental duties in the Central Tibetan Administration, and would turn over political authority to the leadership democratically elected by Tibetans in exile;

Whereas, on March 20, 2011, the Tibetan government in exile conducted competitive democratic elections that were monitored by international observers and deemed free, fair, and consistent with international standards;

Whereas nearly 50,000 people in over 30 countries, more than half of all the eligible Tibetan exiles voters, participated in the March 20, 2011, elections;

Whereas Dr. Lobsang Sangay was elected Kalon Tripa, or prime minister, of the Central Tibetan Administration after receiving 55 percent of votes in the March 20, 2011, election and was inaugurated on August 8, 2011;

Whereas Kalon Tripa Sangay was selected to study in the United States under the Department of State’s Tibetan Scholarship Program, earning a doctorate in law from Harvard University, and served as a Senior Fellow at the East Asian Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School;

Whereas Kalon Tripa Sangay, while at Harvard University, promoted dialogue among Tibetan exiles and Chinese students and visiting Chinese scholars to enhance mutual understanding and advance the prospects for reconciliation; and

Whereas it is the objective of the United States Government, consistent across administrations of different political parties and as articulated in the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (subtitle B of title VI of Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901 note) to promote a substantive dialogue between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives in order to secure genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within China: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) mourns the death of Tibetans who have self-immolated and deplors the repressive policies targeting Tibetans;

(2) calls on the Government of the People’s Republic of China to suspend implementation of religious control regulations, reassess religious and security policies implemented since 2008 in Tibet, and resume a dialogue with Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama or his representatives, to resolve underlying grievances;

(3) calls on the Government of the People’s Republic of China to release all persons that have been arbitrarily detained; to cease the intimidation, harassment and detention of peaceful protestors; and to allow unrestricted access to journalists, foreign diplomats, and international organizations to Tibet;

(4) calls on the Secretary of State to seek from the Government of the People’s Republic of China a full accounting of the forcible removal of monks from Kirti Monastery, including an explanation of the pretext or conditions under which monks were removed and their current whereabouts;

(5) commends His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his decision to devolve his political power in favor of a democratic system;

(6) congratulates Tibetans living in exile for holding, on March 20, 2011, a competitive, multi-candidate election that was free, fair, and met international electoral standards;

(7) reaffirms the unwavering friendship between the people of the United States and the people of Tibet; and

(8) both—

(A) calls on the Department of State to fully implement the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (subtitle B of title VI of Public Law 107-228; 22 U.S.C. 6901 note), including the stipulation that the Secretary of State seek “to

establish an office in Lhasa, Tibet, to monitor political, economic, and cultural developments in Tibet”, and also to provide consular protection and citizen services in emergencies; and

(B) urges that the agreement to permit China to open further diplomatic missions in the United States should be contingent upon the establishment of a United States Government consulate in Lhasa, Tibet.

CONDEMNING VIOLENCE BY SYRIA AGAINST JOURNALISTS AND EXPRESSING SENSE OF THE SENATE FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN SYRIA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 348, S. Res. 391.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 391) condemning violence by the Government of Syria against journalists, and expressing the sense of the Senate on freedom of the press in Syria.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution which had been reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations without amendment and an amendment to the preamble, as follows:

[Omit the part printed in boldface brackets and insert the part printed in italic.]

S. RES. 391

[Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) obliges states to ensure the safety of journalists in war zones;]

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) stresses the obligations of states under international law to ensure the safety of journalists in war zones;

Whereas, since the uprisings in Syria began in January 2011, the Government of Syria has denied entry to foreign journalists and arrested, abducted, beaten, tortured, and killed journalists, photographers, and bloggers to prevent the free flow of accurate information to the outside world;

Whereas restrictions imposed by the Government of Syria on media have made it extraordinarily difficult to verify death tolls and the exact nature and course of events within the country;

Whereas Syrian state media reports differ significantly from the few independent reports that make their way out of Syria;

Whereas Reporters Without Borders, an international nongovernmental organization that advocates freedom of the press and freedom of information, has listed Bashar al-Assad as a Predator of Freedom of the Press;

Whereas the League of Arab States called for the media to be allowed into Syria during its monitoring mission that was suspended indefinitely on January 28, 2012, due to the “critical deterioration of the situation” in Syria;

Whereas freelance journalist Ferzat Jarban was tortured and killed on November 19 or 20, 2011, after filming protests in Al-Qassir, Syria;

Whereas videographer Basil al-Sayed died on December 27, 2011, from a gunshot wound he suffered 5 days earlier at a checkpoint in the Baba Amr neighborhood in the city of Homs, Syria;

Whereas Shukri Abu al-Burghul of the state-owned daily Al Thawra and Radio Da-

mascus died on January 3, 2012, in Damascus, Syria from a gunshot wound to the head he suffered four days earlier;

Whereas Gilles Jacquier, a correspondent with France 2 television, was killed in a grenade explosion on January 11, 2012, while covering demonstrations in the city of Homs;

Whereas freelance journalist Mazhar Tayyara, a videographer and photojournalist who contributed to Agence France-Presse and other international outlets, was killed by government forces’ fire in the city of Homs on February 4, 2012;

Whereas New York Times correspondent Anthony Shadid died of an asthma attack on February 16, 2012, while attempting to leave Syria after reporting inside the country for a week, gathering information on the Free Syrian Army and other armed elements of the resistance to the government of President Bashar al-Assad;

Whereas freelance journalist Rami al-Sayed, who filmed videos of Syrian security forces’ repressive acts, was killed on February 21, 2012, while covering the bombardment of the city of Homs by Government of Syria forces;

Whereas journalist Marie Colvin of the Sunday Times, a United States citizen, and freelance photojournalist Remi Ochlik were killed on February 22, 2012, after their makeshift press center in Homs was struck by rockets fired by Government of Syria forces;

Whereas, on February 22, 2012, Department of State Spokesman Mark Toner stated, “[T]oday, we’re also clearly deeply troubled and saddened by reports that American journalist Marie Colvin and French journalist Remi Ochlik were killed today in Homs as a result of the intense shelling, the ongoing intense shelling by the Syrian regime. . . . We, of course, extend our deepest condolences to their families and loved ones and just note that their sacrifice in chronicling the daily suffering of the people of Homs stands as a testament to journalism’s highest standards.”;

Whereas 13 opposition activists in Syria were killed during a weeklong attempt to rescue 4 foreign journalists, 2 of whom were injured, who were trapped in Homs as a result of the bombardment by the Government of Syria that killed Marie Colvin and Remi Ochlik;

Whereas videographer Anas al-Tarsha, who documented unrest in the besieged city of Homs, was killed by a mortar round while filming the bombardment of the city’s Qarabees district on February 24, 2012;

Whereas, from 1992 through 2010, zero journalists were killed in Syria according to the Committee to Protect Journalists; and

Whereas the Government of Syria has continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain prominent Syrian journalists and bloggers;

Mr. REID. I ask that the Senate now vote on this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 391) was agreed to.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 391

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) stresses the obligations of states under international law to ensure the safety of journalists in war zones;

Whereas, since the uprisings in Syria began in January 2011, the Government of Syria has denied entry to foreign journalists and arrested, abducted, beaten, tortured, and killed journalists, photographers, and bloggers to prevent the free flow of accurate information to the outside world;

Whereas restrictions imposed by the Government of Syria on media have made it extraordinarily difficult to verify death tolls and the exact nature and course of events within the country;

Whereas Syrian state media reports differ significantly from the few independent reports that make their way out of Syria;

Whereas Reporters Without Borders, an international nongovernmental organization that advocates freedom of the press and freedom of information, has listed Bashar al-Assad as a Predator of Freedom of the Press;

Whereas the League of Arab States called for the media to be allowed into Syria during its monitoring mission that was suspended indefinitely on January 28, 2012, due to the “critical deterioration of the situation” in Syria;

Whereas freelance journalist Ferzat Jarban was tortured and killed on November 19 or 20, 2011, after filming protests in Al-Qassir, Syria;

Whereas videographer Basil al-Sayed died on December 27, 2011, from a gunshot wound he suffered 5 days earlier at a checkpoint in the Baba Amr neighborhood in the city of Homs, Syria;

Whereas Shukri Abu al-Burghul of the state-owned daily Al Thawra and Radio Damascus died on January 3, 2012, in Damascus, Syria from a gunshot wound to the head he suffered four days earlier;

Whereas Gilles Jacquier, a correspondent with France 2 television, was killed in a grenade explosion on January 11, 2012, while covering demonstrations in the city of Homs;

Whereas freelance journalist Mazhar Tayyara, a videographer and photojournalist who contributed to Agence France-Presse and other international outlets, was killed by government forces’ fire in the city of Homs on February 4, 2012;

Whereas New York Times correspondent Anthony Shadid died of an asthma attack on February 16, 2012, while attempting to leave Syria after reporting inside the country for a week, gathering information on the Free Syrian Army and other armed elements of the resistance to the government of President Bashar al-Assad;

Whereas freelance journalist Rami al-Sayed, who filmed videos of Syrian security forces’ repressive acts, was killed on February 21, 2012, while covering the bombardment of the city of Homs by Government of Syria forces;

Whereas journalist Marie Colvin of the Sunday Times, a United States citizen, and freelance photojournalist Remi Ochlik were killed on February 22, 2012, after their makeshift press center in Homs was struck by rockets fired by Government of Syria forces;

Whereas, on February 22, 2012, Department of State Spokesman Mark Toner stated, “[T]oday, we’re also clearly deeply troubled and saddened by reports that American journalist Marie Colvin and French journalist Remi Ochlik were killed today in Homs as a result of the intense shelling, the ongoing intense shelling by the Syrian regime. . . . We,