

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Condemning the Government of Iran for restricting and suppressing freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly, and for its human rights abuses, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KAUFMAN (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. DODD, Mr. KYL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. BROWNBACK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning the Government of Iran for restricting and suppressing freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly, and for its human rights abuses, and for other purposes.

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Iranian citizens have engaged in peaceful protest since the June 12, 2009, presidential election in Iran;

Whereas the Government of Iran has responded to these protests with a concerted campaign of intimidation, repression, and violence, including human rights abuses against Iranian citizens;

Whereas there have been numerous allegations of torture, rape, imprisonment, and violence perpetrated against Ira-

nian citizens by the Government of Iran since the June 12 elections;

Whereas the Government of Iran has sought to restrict and suppress the legitimate right of the people of Iran to exercise freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press;

Whereas the Government of Iran has monitored, controlled, and censored access to the Internet, and has conducted a campaign of harassment and intimidation through the electronic media;

Whereas Freedom House assesses Internet and digital media in Iran as “Not Free,” and characterizes the Government of Iran as wielding “one of the world’s most sophisticated apparatuses for controlling the internet and other digital technologies”;

Whereas the Government of Iran is engaged in a range of activities that interfere with, or infringe upon, the right of the people of Iran to access accurate, independent news and information;

Whereas, according to Amnesty International, the Government of Iran has banned several newspapers, including Farhang-e Ashti, Arman-e Ravabet-e Omomi, Tahlil-e Rooz, and Sarmayeh;

Whereas the Government of Iran has harassed, arrested, detained, imprisoned, and assaulted numerous Iranian and foreign journalists, publishers, editors, photographers, cameramen, and bloggers;

Whereas the Government of Iran has prohibited Iranian and non-Iranian news services from distributing reports in Farsi;

Whereas the Government of Iran has revoked and temporarily suspended the accreditation of foreign journalists to report on current events and news developments in Iran;

Whereas the Government of Iran has interrupted short message service (SMS), preventing text message communications and blocking Internet sites that utilize such services;

Whereas the Government of Iran has partially jammed short-wave and medium wave transmissions of Radio Farda, the Persian language service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty;

Whereas the Government of Iran has intermittently jammed satellite broadcasts by Radio Farda, the Voice of America's Persian News Network (PNN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and other non-Iranian government news services;

Whereas the Government of Iran has blocked Web sites and blogs, including social networking, content-sharing, and blogging sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Orkut, Blogger, and Persianblog;

Whereas the Government of Iran has targeted, blocked, and limited Internet connections and mobile network access to thwart communication in advance of planned demonstrations, and has seized mobile phones that were used to film or document the demonstrations;

Whereas the Government of Iran has monitored online activities of Iranians and threatened them and their families with punitive action, including citizens of Iran and Iranian-Americans living in the United States and elsewhere overseas;

Whereas, in November 2009, the police forces of the Government of Iran formed a special unit to monitor websites and “Internet crimes,” including political offenses;

Whereas the Victims of Iranian Censorship Act (subtitle D of title XII of Public Law 111–84), which was signed into law on October 28, 2009, stipulates that “it shall be the policy of the United States to encourage the development of technologies, including Internet Web sites, that facilitate the efforts of the Iranian people to gain access to and share accurate information and exercise freedom of speech, freedom of expressions, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press, through the Internet or other electronic media”;

Whereas on December 10, 2009, President Barack Obama affirmed in his statement accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, “We will bear witness to the quiet dignity of reformers. . .to the hundreds of thousands who have marched silently through the streets of Iran. It is telling that the leaders of these governments fear the aspirations of their own people more than the power of any other nation. And it is the responsibility of all free people and free nations to make clear to these movements that hope and history are on their side.”

Whereas, on December 18, 2009, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling on the Government of Iran to respect its human rights obligations, including its obligations under its own constitution as well as those of international human rights law; and

Whereas, on December 18, 2009, the Department of State issued a statement welcoming the passage of the United Nations resolution which stated, “The resolution, first adopted last month by the UN Third Committee, ex-

presses deep concern over the brutal response of Iranian authorities to peaceful demonstrations in the wake of the June 12 election. . . Those in Iran who are trying to exercise their universal rights should know that their voices are being heard.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the right of the people of Iran to
3 peacefully express their voices, opinions, and aspira-
4 tions, despite intimidation, repression, and violence;

5 (2) condemns the human rights abuses com-
6 mitted by the Government of Iran against Iranian
7 citizens;

8 (3) condemns the efforts of the Government of
9 Iran to restrict and suppress freedom of the press,
10 freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and free-
11 dom of assembly;

12 (4) condemns online censorship, monitoring, in-
13 timidation, and harassment conducted by the Gov-
14 ernment of Iran, including threats against citizens of
15 Iran and Iranian-Americans living in the United
16 States;

17 (5) condemns an atmosphere of impunity in
18 Iran for those who employ censorship, intimidation,
19 harassment, or violence to restrict and suppress
20 freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of
21 assembly, and freedom of the press;

1 (6) condemns the Government of Iran for vio-
2 lating the International Covenant on Civil and Polit-
3 ical Rights, done at New York December 16, 1966,
4 and entered into force March 23, 1976, which has
5 been ratified by Iran and states, “Everyone shall
6 have the right to freedom of expression; this right
7 shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart in-
8 formation and ideas of all kinds, regardless of fron-
9 tiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form
10 of art, or through any other media of his choice.”;

11 (7) welcomes the decision made by the Depart-
12 ment of State on December 15, 2009, to foster and
13 support the free flow of information to Iranian citi-
14 zens by recommending that the Department of the
15 Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)
16 issue a general license that would authorize
17 downloads of free mass market software to Iran nec-
18 essary for the exchange of personal communications
19 or sharing of information or both over the Internet
20 as deemed “essential to the national interest of the
21 United States”; and

22 (8) urges the implementation of the Victims of
23 Iranian Censorship Act (subtitle D of title XII of
24 Public Law 111–84).