

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 317

Calling for the unconditional release of United States citizens and legal permanent resident aliens being held for political purposes by the Government of Iran.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 4, 2017

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. POE of Texas, and Mr. DEUTCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling for the unconditional release of United States citizens and legal permanent resident aliens being held for political purposes by the Government of Iran.

Whereas Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has taken as hostages Siamak Namazi, Baquer Namazi, Karan Vafadari, and a fourth not publicly identified United States citizen as well as United States legal permanent residents Afarin Niasari and Nizar Zakka;

Whereas Siamak Namazi was detained on October 15, 2015, falsely accused and convicted on October 18, 2016, for "collaborating with a hostile government", and has been held for extended periods in solitary confinement and under constant interrogation;

Whereas former UNICEF official Baquer Namazi, the 80-year old father of Siamak Namazi and has a deteriorating health status, was detained on February 22, 2016, falsely accused and convicted to 10 years in prison for the identical crime as his son;

Whereas former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged Iranian authorities to release Baquer Namazi to allow his family to care for him;

Whereas UNICEF has issued four public statements on Baquer Namazi's behalf;

Whereas Karan Vafadari, a United States citizen, and his wife, Afarin Niasari, an Iranian national and United States legal permanent resident alien, were detained in late July 2016 and has been held without charge or access to counsel;

Whereas a fourth United States citizen is detained in Iran though his family has wished for him not to be publicly identified;

Whereas Robert Levinson, a United States citizen and retired agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, traveled to Kish Island, Iran, and disappeared on March 9, 2007;

Whereas the United States Government had "secured a commitment from the Iranians . . . to try and gather information about Mr. Levinson's possible whereabouts" but has not received any information thus far;

Whereas Nizar Zakka, a United States legal permanent resident alien and Lebanese national, who is also in a weakened physical state, was unlawfully detained on September 18, 2015, in Iran after attending a women's Arab Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) con-

ference, at Iran’s invitation, and was later falsely charged of being a spy sentenced to 10 years at the Evin prison;

Whereas, on April 13, 2017, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned the Tehran Prisons Organization and its former head, Sohrab Soleimani, and White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer noted “The sanctions against human rights abusers in Iran’s prisons come at a time when Iran continues to unjustly detain in its prisons various foreigners, including US citizens Siamak Namazi and Baquer Namazi”;

Whereas, on April 25, 2017, at the meeting of the Joint Commission overseeing implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Department of State reported that the United States delegation had “raised with the Iranian delegation its serious concerns regarding the cases of U.S. citizens detained and missing in Iran, and called on Iran to immediately release these U.S. citizens so they can be reunited with their families”;

Whereas elements of the Iranian regime are reportedly using nationals and dual-nationals from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and other countries to exact political or financial concessions; and

Whereas reports indicate that the Government of Iran is seeking additional payments or other concessions, including relief from economic sanctions, from the families of hostages and their governments as a condition of release, a practice banned by the 1979 International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages and other international legal norms: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1 (1) calls on the Government of the Islamic Re-
2 public of Iran to release unconditionally Siamak
3 Namazi, Baquer Namazi, Karan Vafadari, Afarin
4 Niasari, Nizar Zakka, and any other United States
5 citizen, legal permanent resident alien, or foreign na-
6 tional being held in Iran;

7 (2) urges the President to make the release of
8 United States citizens and legal permanent resident
9 aliens held hostage by the Government of Iran the
10 highest of priorities;

11 (3) requests that the United States and its al-
12 lies whose nationals have been detained consider es-
13 tablishing a multinational task force to secure the
14 release of the detainees;

15 (4) urges the Government of Iran to take mean-
16 ingful steps towards fulfilling its repeated promises
17 to assist in locating and returning Robert Levinson,
18 including immediately providing all available infor-
19 mation from all entities of the Government of Iran
20 regarding the disappearance of Robert Levinson to
21 the United States Government;

22 (5) encourages the President to take meaning-
23 ful action to secure the release of Siamak Namazi,
24 Baquer Namazi, Karan Vafadari, Afarin Niasari,
25 Nizar Zakka, and any other United States citizen,

1 legal permanent resident alien, or foreign national
2 being held in Iran if the Government of Iran does
3 not release such United States citizens, legal perma-
4 nent resident aliens, and foreign nationals; and

5 (6) encourages the President to take meaning-
6 ful action to secure the return of Robert Levinson
7 if the Government of Iran does not locate and return
8 him.

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