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(Original Signature of Member)

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES.

Supporting the rights of the people of Iran to free expression, condemning the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. DEUTCH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Supporting the rights of the people of Iran to free expression, condemning the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests, and for other purposes.

Whereas, on November 15, 2019, popular protests against the Iranian regime began and rapidly spread to at least 21 cities throughout the country, in the most significant antigovernment protests in Iran since June 2009;

Whereas the protests began in response to an announced increase on the price of fuel and protesters have expressed numerous economic grievances, while also calling for the structural reform of the political system and condemning current and former Iranian leaders;

Whereas reports indicate that Iranian security forces have used lethal force in arresting more than 7,000 people and killed at least 208 in connection with the protests;

Whereas reports indicate that Iranian Government authorities have, in many instances, refused to return victims' bodies to their families and that security forces have removed bodies from morgues and transferred them to unknown locations;

Whereas, on November 16, 2019, Iranian authorities began implementing a near-total shutdown of internet services, stopping nearly all means of online communications for people inside Iran, to preclude the sharing of images and videos of deadly violence being used by security forces;

Whereas section 103(b)(2)(B) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8512(b)(2)(B)) authorizes licensing services relating to personal communications over the Internet, to improve the ability of the Iranian people to speak freely;

Whereas, on November 16, 2019, Iran's Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said that the Iranian regime will no longer show "tolerance" and "self-control" toward the protesters;

Whereas, on November 17, 2019, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called the demonstrators "villains" galvanized by foreign enemies and domestic insurgents and ordered Iranian security services to "implement their duties" to end the protests;

Whereas, on November 18, 2019, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps deployed to the city of Mahshahr and engaged in mass repression, reportedly killing as many as 100 people;

Whereas several laws provide authorities to designate and sanction elements of the Iranian regime involved in significant corruption or serious human rights abuses, including the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, and the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012;

Whereas the Iranian regime was implicated in a June 2018 terrorist plot against a meeting of Iranian opposition activists in Paris;

Whereas Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its Basij militia have been sanctioned by the United States for planning and carrying out serious human rights abuses against the Iranian people, including for the cruel and prolonged torture of political dissidents;

Whereas the regime has routinely violated the human rights of Iranian citizens, including by implementing ongoing, systematic, and serious restrictions of freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of opinion and expression, including the continuing closures of media outlets, arrests of journalists, and the censorship of expression in online forums such as blogs and websites;

Whereas the Department of State's 2018 Human Rights Report on Iran noted "severe restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet, including censorship, site blocking, and criminalization of libel; substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, such as overly restrictive nongovernmental organization (NGO) laws; egregious restrictions of religious freedom; restrictions on political participation; widespread corruption at all levels of government";

Whereas, on November 18, 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated that, “The United States is monitoring the ongoing protests in Iran closely. We condemn strongly any acts of violence committed by this regime against the Iranian people and are deeply concerned by reports of several fatalities. . .The Islamic Republic must cease violence against its own people and should immediately restore the ability of all Iranians to access a free and open Internet.”;

Whereas, on November 22, 2019, the United States imposed sanctions on Iran’s Minister of Information and Communications Technology for his role in shutting down internet access in Iran;

Whereas, on November 18, 2019, the Office of the German Chancellor stated that, “It is legitimate and deserving of our respect when people courageously air their economic and political grievances, as is currently happening in Iran. The Iranian government should respond to the current protests with a willingness to engage in dialogue. . .We urge the government in Tehran to respect freedom of assembly and expression.”;

Whereas, on November 20, 2019, the French Foreign Ministry stated that, “France is following the demonstrations taking place in Iran with concern. It expresses its deep concern at reports that a large number of demonstrators have been killed in the last few days. It reaffirms its attachment to respect for the freedom of expression and to access to means of communication, as well as to the right to demonstrate peacefully. France calls on Iran to comply with its international human rights obligations, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”;

Whereas, on November 21, 2019, the European Union stated that, “The protests in several Iranian cities over the past days have, according to reports, led to serious loss of life and left many people injured. We convey our condolences to the families of victims and wish a speedy recovery to those injured. Socio-economic challenges should be addressed through inclusive dialogue and not through the use of violence. We expect Iran’s security forces to exercise maximum restraint in handling the protests and for protestors to demonstrate peacefully. Any violence is unacceptable. The rights to freedom of expression and assembly must be guaranteed. We also expect the Iranian authorities to ensure the free flow of information and access to the internet.”;

Whereas Iran is a member of the United Nations, voted for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among other international human rights treaties;

Whereas in violation of these and other international obligations, Iranian regime officials continue to violate the fundamental human rights of the Iranian people;

Whereas the Iranian regime has a long history of violent repression of dissent, including—

- (1) in 1988, the Iranian regime carrying out the barbaric mass executions of thousands of political prisoners by hanging and firing squad for refusing to renounce their political affiliations and in some cases for possessing political reading material, including prisoners of conscience, teenagers, and pregnant women;

(2) in 1999, the Iranian regime brutally suppressing a student revolt that was one of the largest mass uprisings up until that point in the country since 1979;

(3) following voting irregularities that resulted in the 2009 election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian regime brutally suppressing peaceful political dissent from wide segments of civil society during the Green Revolution in a cynical attempt to retain its undemocratic grip on power; and

(4) beginning in December 2017, and continuing for several months after protests erupted in more than 80 cities, the Iranian regime suppressing such protests with repressive force that resulted in at least 25 deaths and 4,000 arrests;

Whereas, on January 9, 2018, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed H. Res. 676, a resolution supporting the rights of the people of Iran to free expression and condemning the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests; and

Whereas, on December 5, 2019, the Department of State identified the Great Tehran Penitentiary (Fashafuyeh) and Qarchack Prison as entities responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights in Iran and subject to the imposition of sanctions under section 106 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9405): Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) stands with the people of Iran that are en-
3 gaged in legitimate and peaceful protests against an
4 oppressive, corrupt regime;

1 (2) condemns the Iranian regime's serious
2 human rights abuses against the Iranian people, sig-
3 nificant corruption, and destabilizing activities
4 abroad;

5 (3) commends the statements of support for the
6 protesters from the executive branch and key allies;

7 (4) calls on all democratic governments and in-
8 stitutions to clearly support the Iranian people's
9 right to live in a free society;

10 (5) demands that the Iranian regime abide by
11 its international obligations with respect to human
12 rights and civil liberties, including freedoms of as-
13 sembly, speech, and press;

14 (6) urges the Administration to work to con-
15 vene emergency sessions of the United Nations Secu-
16 rity Council and the United Nations Human Rights
17 Council to condemn the ongoing human rights viola-
18 tions perpetrated by the Iranian regime and estab-
19 lish a mechanism by which the Security Council can
20 monitor such violations;

21 (7) encourages the Administration to expedite
22 the license of communications technology to Iran to
23 improve the ability of the Iranian people to speak
24 freely;

1 (8) calls on companies to reject requests by the
2 regime to cut off the Iranian people from social
3 media and other communications platforms;

4 (9) respects the proud history and rich culture
5 of the Iranian nation and fully supports efforts by
6 the people of Iran to promote the establishment of
7 basic freedoms that build the foundation for the
8 emergence of a freely elected, open, and democratic
9 political system;

10 (10) supports the right of Iranian dissidents to
11 assemble, without fear of persecution and violence,
12 whether in Iran or internationally; and

13 (11) urges the President and the Secretary of
14 State to work with the international community to
15 ensure that violations of human rights are part of all
16 formal and informal multilateral or bilateral discus-
17 sions with and regarding Iran.