

S./H. Res.

International Shia Rights resolution

In the Senate/House, U.S.,

January, 21, 2015

A United States Senate/House resolution in support of the protection of the rights of Shia Muslims throughout the world.

Whereas Shia Muslims throughout the world have faced discrimination and violence at the hands of governments and militant groups alike due to their religious beliefs which has led to the deaths and impoverishment of thousands of people.

Whereas Shia Islam is a minority sect of Islam with its origins stretching back to the seventh century and holds various religious difference from their Sunni counterparts.

Whereas there are roughly 150,000,000 followers of Shia Islam which are divided into various schools of thought such as Twelvers, Ismailis, Zaydis, Alawites, and Bohra around the world which is roughly 15 percent of the global Muslim population which is 1.6 billion people.

Whereas Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain have majority Shi'a Muslim populations and other nations in the region such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, and Syria contain significant Shia populations.

Whereas Shia Muslims in many of the aforementioned countries and in many others are excluded from both government services and employment in the government solely on the basis of their religious identification.

Whereas Shia Muslims also face imminent death from militants that are affiliated to the Islamic State, or ISIL, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in South Asia and North Africa.

Whereas the Department of State 2013 International Religious Freedom Report stated, "Militants in Pakistan killed more than 400 Shia Muslims in sectarian attacks throughout the year".

Whereas the Department of State 2013 International Religious Freedom Report stated, "Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia continued to face discrimination and prejudice, as were others who did not adhere to the government's interpretation of Islam".

Whereas the Department of State 2013 International Religious Freedom Report stated that in Bahrain, "Shia Muslims suffered discrimination in employment and government services, and there were reports of arbitrary arrest and excessive use of force".

Whereas the Department of State 2013 International Religious Freedom Report stated that in Egypt, “On June 23, a mob of thousands of angry villagers led by Salafist sheikhs killed four Shia citizens, including a prominent cleric, in a village near Cairo. The lynching followed months of government and official Islamic anti-Shia rhetoric and was immediately preceded by incendiary speech at a mosque”.

Whereas although Iran is a Shia state, it has violated the freedom of expression of its citizens on a regular basis as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran stated, “since 22 May 2014 at least 36 individuals that include journalists, bloggers, filmmakers and authors, many of whom are also human rights activists, have been arrested summoned or sentenced in connection with their journalistic activities or for simply expressing their opinion on social media websites”.

Whereas President Barack Obama declared on Religious Freedom Day, “Foremost among the rights Americans hold sacred is the freedom to worship as we choose···we also remember that religious liberty is not an American right; it is a universal human right to be protected here at home and across the globe. This freedom is an essential part of human dignity, and without it our world cannot know lasting peace”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate---

- (1) Deplores and condemns the religious bigotry, vandalism and destruction of property, and violent attacks on and intimidation of innocent Shia civilians by armed extremists and government entities
- (2) Calls on the United States Department of State to work with the central governments of states with significant Shia populations, the diaspora community in the United States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other key stakeholders for those seeking safety around the world.
- (3) Calls on the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human rights on a sustained basis to document human rights abuses against Shia civilians around the world and develop an immediate plan to facilitate safe humanitarian access to health care, fuel, electricity, and basic security for the most vulnerable civilian populations.
- (4) Calls upon the governments in the Middle East, North Africa, and South to take immediate steps to protect the safety and constitutional rights of all Shia citizens.
- (5) Reaffirms its opposition to actions taken by the Iranian government and by militias such as Hezbollah and does not recognize these entities as representative of Shia Muslims.
- (6) Reaffirms its commitments to promoting and protecting religious freedom around the world and providing relief to minority groups facing persecution.

Attest: