

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 430

Calling on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately release Dr. Haleh Esfandiari.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 2007

Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GILCHREST, and Mr. ACKERMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately release Dr. Haleh Esfandiari.

Whereas Dr. Haleh Esfandiari, Ph.D., holds dual citizenship in the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas Dr. Esfandiari taught Persian language and literature for many years at Princeton University, where she inspired untold numbers of students to study the rich Persian language and culture;

Whereas Dr. Esfandiari is a resident of the State of Maryland and the Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC (referred to in this preamble as the “Wilson Center”);

Whereas, for the past decade, Dr. Esfandiari has traveled to Iran twice a year to visit her ailing 93-year-old mother;

Whereas, in December 2006, on her return to the airport during her last visit to Iran, Dr. Esfandiari was robbed by 3 masked, knife-wielding men, who stole her travel documents, luggage, and other effects;

Whereas, when Dr. Esfandiari attempted to obtain replacement travel documents in Iran, she was invited to an interview by a representative of the Ministry of Intelligence of Iran;

Whereas Dr. Esfandiari was interrogated by the Ministry of Intelligence for 7 to 8 hours per day;

Whereas the questioning of the Ministry of Intelligence focused on the Middle East Program at the Wilson Center;

Whereas Dr. Esfandiari answered all questions to the best of her ability, and the Wilson Center also provided extensive information to the Ministry in a good faith effort to aid Dr. Esfandiari;

Whereas Lee Hamilton, former United States Representative and president of the Wilson Center, has written to the President of Iran to call his attention to Dr. Esfandiari's dire situation;

Whereas Mr. Hamilton repeated that the Wilson Center's mission is to provide forums to exchange views and opinions and not to take positions on issues, nor try to influence specific outcomes;

Whereas the lengthy interrogations of Dr. Esfandiari by the Ministry of Intelligence of Iran stopped on February 14, 2007, but she heard nothing for 10 weeks and was denied her passport;

Whereas, on May 7, 2007, Dr. Esfandiari was summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence and taken immediately to Evin prison, where she is currently being held;

Whereas the Ministry of Intelligence has yet to produce any evidence of wrong-doing on Dr. Esfandiari's behalf to justify its actions toward her; and

Whereas the Government of Iran should immediately and unconditionally release Dr. Esfandiari and all other individuals being detained for participating in the free exchange of scholarship and ideas: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the House of Representatives calls on the
3 Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to im-
4 mediately release Dr. Haleh Esfandiari, replace her
5 lost travel documents, and cease its harassment tac-
6 tics; and

7 (2) it is the sense of the House of Representa-
8 tives that—

9 (A) the United States Government,
10 through all appropriate means and diplomatic
11 channels, should encourage the Government of
12 Iran to release Dr. Esfandiari and offer her an
13 apology; and

14 (B) the United States should coordinate its
15 response with its allies throughout the Middle

- 1 East, other governments, and all appropriate
- 2 international organizations.

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