

For Immediate Release

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U.S. SENATE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTS RESOLUTION URGING IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF SIAMAK AND BAQUER NAMAZI AND OTHER AMERICAN CITIZEN HOSTAGES IN IRAN

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, the U.S. Senate unanimously adopted S.Res.245, which demands that Iran release all American citizen hostages and legal permanent residents illegally detained in Iran. It also urged President Trump to make the release of these American hostages a top priority. A parallel resolution, H.Res.317, was unanimously adopted in the U.S. House of Representatives on July 26, 2017.

The Senate resolution was led by Senators Cruz and Leahy, with Sens. Booker, Menendez, Young, Gardner, Cotton, Rubio, Perdue, and Nelson as co-sponsors. You can see Senators Cruz and Leahy's joint press release in reaction to the Senate's vote **below**.

In response to the adoption of the bill, Babak Namazi, the brother and son of Siamak and Baquer, respectively, said:

“I want to thank the entire Senate for standing in solidarity with my father and brother. I am so incredibly grateful for their strong support in advocating for their release. I especially want to thank Senators Cruz and Leahy, whose leadership and support have been critical and without whom this resolution could not have happened.”

On June 19, 2017, President Trump issued a statement on the passing of American citizen Otto Warmbier, who was returned to the U.S. from North Korea in a coma: “Otto’s fate deepens my Administration’s determination to prevent such tragedies from befalling innocent people at the hands of regimes that do not respect the rule of law or basic human decency.”

Jared Genser, Founder of Freedom Now and counsel to the Namazi family, added:

“Now the Senate has spoken in one voice urging the immediate and unconditional release of American citizens Baquer and Siamak Namazi. It is incredibly important that the Senate has joined the U.S. House in unanimously calling for their release. At this point, it is essential that President Trump do everything in his power to bring Baquer and Siamak Namazi home to prevent another tragedy at the hands of a cruel regime.”

The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued their opinion in September 2017 that Baquer and Siamak are detained in violation of international law. The rapid deterioration of their health continues to be a paramount concern. Baquer, 81-years-old, is suffering from exhaustion, shortness of breath, dizziness, and confusion. He was briefly hospitalized on September 18, when prison doctors installed a pacemaker in an emergency surgery. At a sideline meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani during the U.N. General Assembly in September, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres directly raised Baquer’s case, urging his release on humanitarian grounds.

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November 1, 2017

Sens. Cruz and Leahy Issue Statement on Passage of Their Bipartisan Resolution Calling for Release of Unjustly Imprisoned Americans

Bipartisan resolution demands release of Americans imprisoned by Iranian Government

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) today issued the following statement regarding the Senate’s passage of their bipartisan resolution calling on the Government of Iran to release all unjustly detained American citizens and legal permanent residents, including Siamak Namazi, Baquer Namazi, Xiyue Wang and Nizar Zakka, and to return Robert Levinson.

“For years the Iranian regime has brutally detained and imprisoned Americans and dual-nationals as a matter of policy, in an effort to leverage the freedom of our citizens for political concessions,” Sen. Cruz said. “We have a moral imperative to speak for the silenced and shackled, to hold those responsible in Iran to account for detaining and mistreating our people, and to fight for the release and return of those held hostage by the Islamic Republic of Iran. I am glad that today the Senate has voted in support of this vital measure. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure the United States safely brings our people back to American soil.”

“There are few more egregious violations of human rights and human dignity than to wrongfully imprison innocent people under harsh conditions for purposes of extortion, which the Government of Iran engages in as a matter of state policy and practice,” Sen. Leahy said. “Baquer Namazi, 80 years old and in failing health, is one of several Iranian-Americans being cruelly abused in this manner. It is imperative that the Administration uses its diplomatic tools to obtain their freedom.”