



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: July 22, 2010
Item Number: E-5
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Cheryl Friedling, Deputy City Manager for Public Affairs
Subject: RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
CONDEMNING IRAN'S PRACTICE OF STONING AND REQUESTING
A HALT TO THE EXECUTION OF SAKINEH MOHAMMADI- ASHTIANI
Attachments: 1. Resolution
2. Article: "Iran Appears to Back Down on Woman's Stoning"

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council approve the Resolution condemning the practice of stoning, and urging Iran to immediately halt any plans to execute Ms. Ashtiani.

INTRODUCTION

Councilman Mirisch has requested that the City Council approve a resolution regarding the plight of an Iranian woman who could be executed by stoning.

DISCUSSION

Human rights organization Amnesty International announced recently that it feared that Iranian resident Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani – a mother of two children – could be imminently executed by stoning.

According to news reports, Ms. Ashtiani was convicted in 2006 for having an adulterous relationship, and can be sentenced to death by stoning.

Since media reports surfaced, an international outcry has resulted, with the United States, the European Union, Britain, France and other prominent organizations urging Iranian authorities to stay the execution. The U.S. State Department has termed the proposed stoning death 'a form of legalized death by torture.'

FISCAL IMPACT

None

Cheryl Friedling
Approved By



Attachment 1

RESOLUTION NO. 10-R-

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
CONDEMNING IRAN'S PRACTICE OF STONING AND REQUESTING A
HALT TO THE EXECUTION OF SAKINEH MOHAMMADI-ASHTIANI

Amnesty International recently announced that Ms. Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani who was convicted by an Iranian court of adultery in 2006, and received 99 lashes could imminently be executed by stoning.

An international outcry has resulted and the European Union, Britain, France, the United States and other organizations have urged Iranian authorities to stay the execution.

World leaders have condemned stoning as a means of execution as "medieval" and a "blatant disregard for human rights". The United States State Department has termed execution by stoning as "tantamount to torture" and a "barbaric and an abhorrent act".

Government leaders, organizations and prominent individuals have urged the Iranian government to overturn Ms. Ashtiani's unjust sentence.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council of the City of Beverly Hills resolves as follows:

Section 1. The City of Beverly Hills condemns the Iranian government's practice of execution by stoning and requests a halt to the execution of Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani.

Section 2. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this resolution and shall cause this resolution and his certification to be entered in the Book of Resolution of the Council of this City.

Adopted:

JIMMY DELSHAD
Mayor of the City of
Beverly Hills, California

ATTEST:

(SEAL)
BYRON POPE
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



LAURENCE S. WIENER
City Attorney

APPROVED AS CONTENT:



CHERYL FRIEDLING
Deputy City Manager/Public Affairs

Attachment 2

Iran appears to back down on woman's stoning

by Alice Ritchie

Fri Jul 9, 10:03 am ET

LONDON (AFP) – Iran appeared Friday to have backed down over the stoning of a woman for adultery amid an international outcry, although her lawyer said she remained in jail and could still be executed by other means.

The Iranian embassy in London said in a statement reported by The Times that Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani would no longer be stoned to death, a practice condemned by Western governments as "medieval" and tantamount to torture.

The embassy said that "according to information from the relevant judicial authorities in Iran, (Mohammadi-Ashtiani) will not be executed by stoning."

Her lawyer in Iran, however, said he had yet to receive any confirmation of the news, and bemoaned the vagueness of the statement which did not say whether she might be killed by other means.

"I have yet to be told of any stay in implementation of the sentence," Mohammad Mostafavi told AFP by telephone. "My client remains in prison."

The embassy did not elaborate on whether her conviction had been quashed or the sentence had been commuted to an alternative form of capital punishment -- in Iran normally hanging from a crane inside prison walls.

"It didn't say the verdict had been overturned, so is she going to face some alternative punishment, is she going to be released or will there be a retrial?" Mostafavi said.

Mohammadi-Ashtiani, 43, was convicted in 2006 or 2007 and has already received 99 lashes, human rights watchdog Amnesty International said. Amnesty International UK warned on July 1 that her execution may be "imminent".

In the past week, the European Union, Britain, France and the United States have urged the Iranian authorities to stay the execution.

An open letter condemning the execution has also been signed by figures such as former US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, three ex-British foreign ministers, Nobel laureate Jose Ramos-Horta and actor Robert De Niro.

Drewery Dyke, researcher on the Middle East at Amnesty International, told AFP the Iranian embassy's statement "raises more questions than it answers".

"It remains to be seen if the judicial authorities in Iran will back the statement of the embassy and order a review of this case," he said. "We remain concerned about what is going to happen to this woman and her family."

On Thursday, British Foreign Secretary William Hague condemned the use of stoning in Iran, saying that if this "medieval" execution went ahead it would "disgust and appal" the rest of the world.

"I think that stoning is a medieval punishment that has no place in the modern world and the continued use of such a punishment in Iran demonstrates in our view a blatant disregard for human rights," he said.

In Washington the same day, US State Department spokesman Mark Toner told reporters: "Stoning as a means of execution is tantamount to torture. It's barbaric and an abhorrent act."

"We condemn in the strongest terms the use of the practice of stoning anywhere it occurs as a form of legalised death by torture," he said.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner added his voice on Friday, saying: "Everything about the case of Mrs. Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani offends the universal conscience."

European Union foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton has also urged Iran to stop the execution of Mohammadi-Ashtiani, saying death by stoning was "a particularly cruel method of execution which amounts to torture."

A host of prominent names from the worlds of politics and arts, including actor Robert Redford and philosopher Bernard Henri Levy, signed an open letter Friday in The Times.

"On top of what she has already endured, Ms. Ashtiani faces a gruesome and agonising death," said the letter. "We urge the Iranian government to overturn this unjust sentence and reconsider Ms. Ashtiani's case."