



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Resolution calling upon the Government of Bangladesh to drop sedition charges against Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury.

Sponsors: Michael C. Nelson, Gale A. Brewer, Letitia James, Alan J. Gerson

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Attachments:

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Res. No. 698

Resolution calling upon the Government of Bangladesh to drop sedition charges against Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury.

By Council Members Nelson, Brewer, James and Gerson

Whereas, Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury is a Bangladeshi journalist and the editor of the Weekly Blitz, the largest tabloid English-language weekly in Bangladesh; and

Whereas, Through his writings, Salah Choudhury has advocated for interfaith dialogue, normalized ties between Bangladesh and Israel, and opposition to Islamic radicalism; and

Whereas, According to an article in the December 8, 2006 edition of The Jewish Week, Salah Choudhury wrote an article for The Jerusalem Post in 2003, advocating for peace between Israel and Bangladesh, and the article prompted an invitation to give a lecture at the International Forum for Literature and Culture of Peace; and

Whereas, According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an independent nonprofit entity that

defends press freedom worldwide, Salah Choudhury was arrested at the Zia International Airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh on November 29, 2003, on his way to Israel to give his lecture and was accused of espionage and charged with sedition; and

Whereas, Sedition is an illegal action inciting resistance to lawful authority and tending to cause the disruption or overthrow of the government, and is punishable by death in Bangladesh; and

Whereas, According to The Jewish Week, Salah Choudhury spent 17 months in unfavorable conditions, which included torture, denial of medical attention and isolation; and

Whereas, Salah Choudhury was released on bail in April 2005, largely due to the efforts of the United States State Department and Illinois Congressman Mark Kirk; and

Whereas, It has been reported that after Salah Choudhury's release, he was continuously harassed and had his life threatened, and the offices of the Weekly Blitz were bombed; and

Whereas, According to a November 14, 2006 News Release from the U.S. House of Representatives, Representative Mark Kirk of Illinois and Representative Nita Lowey of New York introduced a resolution calling on the Bangladeshi government to drop all pending charges against Salah Choudhury; and

Whereas, Salah Choudhury has received various honors and awards recognizing his courage and promotion of peace, including the "Freedom to Write Award" from PEN USA and the "Moral Courage Award" from the American Jewish Committee; and

Whereas, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 states that, "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers"; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Government of Bangladesh to drop sedition charges against Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury.

SO
LS# 2314
1/23/07
3:45pm