



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0881-2003, **Version:** *

Res. No. 881

Resolution commending the Iraqi lawyer, members of the US Marines, Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, and Air Force fliers who rescued Army private Jessica Lynch, and commending the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services for granting Mohammed al-Rehaief, his wife and their 5-year-old daughter asylum.

By Council Members Vallone, Avella, Fidler, Gennaro, Gentile, Jackson, Katz, McMahon, Nelson, Quinn, Recchia, Sears, Vann, Weprin and Lanza

Whereas, Jessica Lynch, a 19-year-old Army private first class from Palestine, West Virginia, after the ambush of her 507th Maintenance Company convoy in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah after it took a wrong turn through an area not protected by US forces, was captured as a prisoner of war on March 23, 2003; and

Whereas, Jessica Lynch, declared as "missing in action" before her heroic rescue from Iraqi hands and after undergoing ten hours of surgery on a broken back and fractured limbs, which are suspected to have been inflicted during her captivity, recovered at a military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany and is now recovering at home; and

Whereas, Injuries sustained by Jessica Lynch included fractures to her right arm, upper and lower left leg, right ankle and lower spine which may have been, according to orthopedic surgeons, caused by a "low-velocity, small-caliber weapon", thus proving her health was in a critical condition at the time of her rescue; and

Whereas, This heroic rescue of Jessica Lynch, along with the bodies of eight members of her unit, was made predominantly with the assistance of a brave Iraqi man, a lawyer identified as Mohammed al-Rehaief, who is reported to have walked miles in efforts to give the US forces tips pertaining to the exact location of Jessica Lynch; and

Whereas, Although exact details of the rescue are not clear, Mr. al-Rehaief's vivid accounts, which were confirmed by US Marine officers, include his witness of the suffering of Private Lynch which moved him to come to her aid as a doctor showed him the room where she was being held; and

Whereas, After managing to sneak inside the room and reassuring Private Lynch that he was seeking help, and at considerable risk to him and his family, Mohammed traveled over 18 miles back and forth from a US Marine patrol, located about six miles from the hospital where Jessica was held, with information as to her whereabouts as well as providing US guards with five hand-drawn maps and a count of the 41 Fedayeen guards; and

Whereas, The rescue that led to Jessica's release was equally inspiring; as the helicopters that carried the Special Operations forces landed outside the hospital, predator drones circled overhead, sending pictures back to intelligence officers, who briefed commanders in the Joint Operations Center; and

Whereas, With the necessary strategic information, the main armed services force landed at the hospital to begin searching for Jessica, while one detachment of Marines made an attack on another part of the city to divert attention from the operation; after finding Lynch in the hospital, the rescuers strapped her to a stretcher and carried her down a flight of steps to a helicopter waiting outside; and

Whereas, The U.S. immigration service recently granted al-Rehaief and his family "humanitarian parole", thus allowing them to arrive in the United States on April 10, and paving the path for them to apply for permanent residency as well as U.S. citizenship in five years; and

Whereas, Mr. al-Rehaief and the men and women of the U.S. armed forces who assisted in the recovery of this American POW from Iraqi hands not only risked their lives to do so, but also exhibited the heroic values of courage and fortitude; and
Whereas, Recognizing the great risk taken by al-Rehaief to insure Lynch's safety, US immigration officials took appropriate humanitarian action by granting asylum to al-Rehaief and his family; and

Whereas, When the City of New York honors the men and women of the armed services who so bravely fought during the Iraq war, it should include Mr. al-Rehaief as one of the honorees, for his valiant and life-saving efforts; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commends the Iraqi lawyer, members of the US Marines, Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, and Air Force fliers who rescued Army private Jessica Lynch, and commending the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services for granting Mohammed al-Rehaief, his wife and their 5-year-old daughter asylum.

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