

Must-Read: Pastor Saeed Abedini's Wife Wrote This to the Head of the UN

American Pastor Saeed Abedini's wife Naghmeh has just sent an impassioned plea to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to use the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York to pressure Iran to free Pastor Saeed.

The ACLJ has also just sent the UN Secretary General a vital legal letter outlining the international human rights laws violated by Iran in its illegal detention of Pastor Saeed, a U.S. citizen. Our letter urges the Secretary General to meet with Iran's president when they are both in New York for the UN General Assembly later this month.

In addition, tens of thousands of Americans are writing letters to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon through a massive letter-writing campaign we launched this week.

This is a critical time for Pastor Saeed as he sits tormented in prison, needing multiple surgeries that he continues to be denied. His life continues to be threatened.

Naghmeh's letter to Ban Ki-moon requesting diplomatic action on behalf of her husband states:

Nearly three years ago, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran imprisoned my husband, Saeed Abedini, solely for peacefully exercising his faith in private homes. Saeed is a dual American-Iranian citizen and a Christian Pastor from Boise, Idaho. He has violated no law of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In July of 2012, Saeed took a trip to Iran to put in place the final board member for an orphanage that he was building

outside the city of Rasht. Iran's Revolutionary Guards put him under house arrest on 28 July 2012 after they forcefully took him off of a bus. On September 26, 2012, Saeed was taken to Evin Prison, where he was detained on charges of attempting to undermine the national security of Iran by peacefully having met with Christians in private homes during the early 2000s. In January 2013, Saeed underwent a trial in Iran's Revolutionary Courts that lacked basic standards of fairness, and Iran convicted and sentenced him to eight years. Saeed has endured severe abuse in Iran's prisons and as a result has been medically diagnosed with needing two separate surgeries for internal injuries, surgeries that the Iranian government has to date withheld.

In 2013 the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that Saeed had been deprived of his liberty for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of religion, belief, and association (a Category II arbitrary detention). The Working Group also found that Saeed has been discriminated against on the basis of his religion (a Category V arbitrary detention) and that he was detained in 2012 without a fair trial (a Category III arbitrary detention). For these violations of international norms and standards, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains unapologetic and unwilling to pursue a just remedy.

With the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly quickly approaching, I respectfully request that you engage directly with the Iranian delegation and President Rouhani while they are in New York and call on the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to release Saeed immediately. I am willing and able to fly to New York to meet with you and to attend any meeting you are able to convene on Saeed's behalf.

Thank you for any assistance that you can give in achieving my husband's return home to the United States and his safe return to our family.

This letter was sent in addition to Naghmeh's letter and her children's pleas to the Iranian President to meet with them while he is in New York.

Last week, the ACLJ also just sent a letter to the Secretary General to outline why the international community must do whatever it takes to bring Pastor Saeed home and protect his basic human rights. Our letter states:

Over the past three years, Mr. Abedini, a Christian with dual United States–Iranian nationality, was: (1) arrested and imprisoned by Iranian Revolutionary Guards; (2) repeatedly beaten in prison while awaiting trial; (3) denied access to proper medical care made necessary by his mistreatment in prison; (4) denied access to his defense attorney until mere hours before being placed on trial; (5) given a sham trial before a judge so notoriously biased and corrupt that he was condemned by name by the European Union for handing down unfair and unduly harsh verdicts; (6) disallowed by the same judge, along with his defense counsel, from attending the second day of his own trial; and (7) sentenced to eight years imprisonment because of his Christian faith and activities...

The conduct of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this matter is especially egregious because it has openly and notoriously violated a whole host of obligations that it has solemnly agreed not only to honor, but to further, in the interest of world peace.

The ACLJ informed the Secretary General that “over 1,133,300 individuals have urged the United Nations and governments around the world to intervene on Mr. Abedini's behalf.” We requested that Secretary General Ban Ki-moon directly engage with Iran on behalf of Pastor Saeed.

Help us send a loud message to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Join our massive letter-writing campaign at the U.N. by writing a letter (or by signing the one we have drafted) at . It's simple; we have a form you can fill out to write a letter for Pastor Saeed, and we'll send it.

Your voice is a critical part of our ongoing multipronged international campaign for Pastor Saeed's freedom. Be heard today.