

Persecuted Pastor Saeed Abedini Suffers Internal Bleeding After Prison Beatings

It began last week. American pastor Saeed Abedini, who is serving an eight-year prison term in Iran because of his Christian faith, has been suffering from internal bleeding for months—injuries received from beatings in prison. In what could only be viewed as a cruel act of psychological abuse, prison officials took Pastor Abedini to a hospital last week—only for him to be turned away and brought back to Evin prison without receiving medical treatment for his internal bleeding.

Now comes word out of Iran that the beatings and physical abuse are intensifying. Abedini reported Monday that last week he was severely beaten the same day the prison officials took him to the hospital.

During the weekly prison visit Monday, Abedini's family reported that his physical condition is worsening, having seen firsthand the marks and symptoms left by the recent beating. These beatings and the internal injuries are causing Pastor Abedini frequent fainting spells. Iranian officials are telling Abedini it could be an additional two months before he will receive medical treatment.

Such a delay is inhumane and a gross violation of Iran's international obligations.

In addition to refusing to give Abedini the medical care he needs, it now appears authorities are stepping up their physical abuse and psychological torture. Abedini reported that cellmates, who appear to have connections to the Iranian

intelligence police, recently threatened they would suffocate the pastor in his sleep, making his death look like an accident. The daily threat that his life could be taken by his internal injuries or by the hands of cellmates weighs heavily on Abedini.

These troubling developments are of grave concern to Abedini's wife, Naghmeh, who lives with their two children in the U.S.

"I cannot express in words how concerned I am about Saeed's physical and mental health," Naghmeh says. "He is now continually attacked and threatened. The Iranian government should know that we are watching and aware of what they are doing to Saeed inside Evin prison. We need to speak louder until Saeed is home safely on U.S. soil."

That is exactly what we are doing at the American Center for Law and Justice. In addition to working at home and around the world to secure Abedini's freedom, we are publicizing his story—putting a global media spotlight on his plight—and applying international pressure on Iran. The truth is, the world is watching and rejects the continued abuse and torture of Pastor Abedini, a U.S. citizen.

Abedini has spoken often about the beatings and abuse he suffers at the hands of his captors. In a recent letter from his prison cell, he wrote that he cannot even recognize himself after all the beatings and torture he has endured: "My hair was shaven, under my eyes were swollen three times what they should have been, my face was swollen, and my beard had grown."

Prison officials want one thing: for Abedini to recant his faith in Christ. And while they continue to try and get him to do that, his faith remains strong—a faith that is clearly keeping him alive.

We ask that you continue to pray for Pastor Abedini. At the same time, we offer thanks to the more than 33,000 people who

have already sent letters of support to Pastor Abedini. If you haven't done so yet, please take a moment and craft a letter of prayer and support for this hostage in Iran. You can send a letter by going to .

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