

Where Is the International Outrage Over Iran's Religious Intolerance?

Christian Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani faced an Iranian court for his third and final "opportunity" to recant his Christian faith. When he refused to do so, he was sentenced to death for apostasy, a judgment that may be carried out at any time.

It is unfathomable to most thinking people that a person in the 21st century can be put to death simply for espousing a faith that differs from that of his nation's ruling powers. Belief cannot be prescribed or proscribed. Faith is the most basic, fundamental right of every human being.

While this kind of religious intolerance from the Islamic government and so-called justice system in Iran (Shariah law) doesn't surprise me, the initial virtual silence of the international community does. A man is sentenced to be killed for the "crime" of a sincere belief in Jesus Christ—a sentence in clear violation of international law. So where is the international outrage?

The international community is complicit in Iran's outrage if our leaders remain silent. House Speaker Boehner was one of the first leaders here in the U.S. to speak out against the atrocity of the Iranian court's sentence against Pastor Nadarkhani. The White House has now issued a statement condemning the sentence and calling for Nadarkhani's immediate release. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and others on the world stage should take immediate action to condemn the sentence imposed on Pastor Nadarkhani. We, as U.S. citizens, must join our voices to continue to press world leaders to take action. Pastor Nadarkhani's life hangs in the balance.

Matthew's Gospel tells us, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (5:10, ESV). Pastor Nadarkhani will certainly be blessed for his unwavering faith when he stands before God. But I hope that Christians across America will join me in praying for his rescue in this life as well.