

Faith Groups Expect Arrests at White House Demonstrations for Persecuted Pastor

Faith organizations troubled by the Obama administration's lack of commitment to the plight of a jailed American pastor in Iran, the **persecuted church** and human rights around the world have organized a campaign in support of the persecuted pastor.

President Obama has yet to call or reach out to Naghmeh Abedini, the wife of pastor **Saeed Abedini**, pledging American support for her imprisoned husband and religious freedom.

This is spite of the fact that Obama personally reached out and called Jason Collins, the first openly gay athlete in an American professional sport, and Sandra Fluke, an attorney, when she called for health insurance plans to cover birth control.

Tragically, an American citizen and pastor being brutalized in an Iranian prison for his Christian faith and the crushing of religious freedom around the world, is not a priority for this administration.

Christian groups and leaders plan a national eight-week campaign at the White House involving peaceful civil disobedience, **prayer** and public witness challenging President Obama to publicly work for the release of pastor Saeed and embrace religious freedom and the persecuted church.

The name of the campaign is called "The Hebrews 13:3 Project" and it begins Monday at 12 p.m. EST in front of the White House on the Pennsylvania Ave. NW side.

"Tragically the **Obama administration** has shown no public

commitment toward securing the release of **pastor Saeed** from a brutal eight-year Iranian prison sentence or embracing religious freedom and the persecuted church around the world," says the Rev. Patrick J. Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition and primary organizer of "The Hebrews 13:3 Project."

"President Obama has shown more interest and passion in protecting birth control in health care than he has in reaching out to a family whose husband and father is being daily brutalized for his Christian faith or standing for religious freedom and the persecuted church," he continues.

"Pastor Saeed is an American citizen and pastor, yet President Obama has never once called his wife, Naghmeh, giving her encouragement or pledging U.S. support for his release."

"Beginning on Monday, Jan. 13, at 12:00 p.m. EST, we will be gathering in front of the White House eight straight Mondays, for prayer, public witness and peaceful civil disobedience challenging President Obama to call Naghmeh Abedini and also make the release of Pastor Saeed a pre-condition for any talks with Iran regarding their nuclear program," concludes Mahoney.

The Rev. Kieth Tucci, founder of The League for the Defense of Christian Pastors, adds: "If character is defined by who we are when no one is looking, then maybe the character of a nation can be defined by what that nation is ignoring.

"We are ignoring the fact that the plight of an American citizen on a mercy mission with justice in his heart cannot even raise a response from the Oval Office—this reveals a serious character flaw.

"While the church itself is not without flaw, there is a rising tide of men who have a patriot spirit who understand not only the plight of this dear man and his family, but that their character is being tested," Tucci continues.

"The League for the Defense of Christian Pastors understands that our actions are being recorded in heaven and we call upon President Obama to publicly engage on this issue."