

Obama Made This Promise to Pastor Saeed Abedni's Wife

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), which is working to secure the release of American Pastor Saeed Abedini from an Iranian prison, said today a private face-to-face meeting between President Obama and American Pastor Saeed Abedini's wife, Naghmeh, and their children elevates Pastor Saeed's plight on the world stage and should send a powerful message to the Iranians: It is time to release this U.S. citizen so he can return home to his family.

President Obama met with Naghmeh and her two young children, 6-year-old Jacob and 8-year-old Rebekka, during a stop in the Abedini's hometown of Boise, Idaho.

"I am extremely thankful the President took the time to meet with our family and told us that securing the release of my husband is a top priority," said Naghmeh Abedini. "The President was focused and gracious—showing concern to me and my children. I know that this meeting could not have occurred without prayer, and I am grateful to the many people around the country and world who continue to pray for Saeed's release. The President repeated his desire to do all that he can to bring Saeed home. That means the world to me and my children and has given me a renewed sense of hope."

The private meeting, which lasted about 10 minutes, occurred in an office at Boise State University, just moments before the President addressed an audience about education.

"We're grateful that President Obama took the time to meet with Naghmeh and speak with her and the children," said Jordan Sekulow, Executive Director of the ACLJ, which represents Naghmeh and her two children. "Pastor Saeed has been wrongly imprisoned for nearly 2 1/2 years. He has been separated from

his wife and children. The pain experienced by the Abedini family is impossible to imagine. The meeting between President Obama and the Abedini family is a very welcomed development. It demonstrates the president's concern and compassion for this family. It also underscores the importance of Pastor Saeed's case, a U.S. citizen imprisoned in Iran merely because of his Christian faith. The face-to-face meeting elevates Pastor Saeed's plight on the world stage—and should send a powerful message to the Iranians: It is time to release Pastor Saeed so he can return home to his family.”

Regarding the meeting, Naghmeh said President Obama entered the room, greeted the children and immediately told her that securing the release of Pastor Saeed was a top priority for him. He recalled the phone call he had some time ago with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and told Naghmeh that Saeed was part of that conversation. The President reiterated that bringing Saeed home is a top priority for him.

Naghmeh told the president that she prays for him often. The president smiled when Naghmeh told him that she had refrained from food and had fasted for days praying that God would grant this meeting with him—and that the meeting itself was the result of that prayer.

Naghmeh told the president that she knows that he cares about families and that the face-to-face meeting with the president reflected the care and concern he has for the Abedini family.

Naghmeh told the president that her son, Jacob, had something to ask him. Jacob asked: “Mr. President, can you please bring daddy home for my birthday?” The President responded, “When is your birthday?” Jacob told him March 17th, when he will turn 7. The President said he will try very hard to bring his father home.

The meeting between the president and the Abedinis occurred after more than 100,000 people signed on to an ACLJ

letter urging President Obama to meet with the family. Pastor Saeed's two young children—Jacob and Rebekka—have recorded a personal plea asking President Obama to bring their father home. That video is available [here](#).

The ACLJ continues to work in this country and abroad to secure the safety and freedom of Pastor Saeed, a U.S. citizen who has been imprisoned in Iran for nearly 2 1/2 years merely because of his Christian faith.

Led by ACLJ Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow, the American Center for Law and Justice is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The ACLJ is online [here](#).