

Pastor Saeed Describes Details of Torture He Endured in Iran Prison

Saeed Abedini, an American pastor freed this month from an Iranian prison as part of a prisoner swap, said in a television interview aired on Monday that he was tortured and left in solitary confinement for refusing to sign a false confession and saw other prisoners being taken to be hanged.

Abedini told Fox News that while in Tehran's Evin prison he was beaten by interrogators, left with an al Qaeda prisoner who tried to kill him and watched people screaming and crying while taken to be hanged.

"Yes, in interrogation once they beat me very badly because they wanted me to write something I didn't do ... Actually it was in a courtroom that the judge closed the door and the interrogators started beating me, and at that time I got a stomach bleeding," he told Fox News.

"The worst thing that I saw was when they took some Sunnis for of them were Sunnis, some of them were political prisoners... I can say most were executed for their faith."

Abedini was supposed to be reunited with his wife and children on Monday at a Christian center in North Carolina, but it was delayed because the family's travel plans have been "in flux day-to-day," a spokesman for the center said.

The Billy Graham Training Center at the Cove, founded by the famed evangelical minister and his family, said Abedini wanted time to adjust and reconnect with his family after more than three years of imprisonment in Iran.

Abedini's wife, Naghmeh, told Reuters last week the couple

would work on their marriage. She said in a message to supporters that became public that her husband had been abusive and suffered from a pornography addiction.

Abedini arrived at the Asheville, North Carolina, center on Thursday. He and his avid supporter Franklin Graham, Billy Graham's son, have so far declined comment.

Abedini, 35, a naturalized U.S. citizen, was sentenced by an Iranian court in 2013 to eight years in prison for allegedly compromising Iran's national security by setting up home-based Christian churches there.

Abedini was one of five Americans released by Iran in exchange for clemency to seven Iranians who were convicted or facing trial in the United States. The swap was announced at the same time as international sanctions on Iran were lifted in a deal with the United States and other major powers to curb Tehran's nuclear program. {eo}

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