

Pastor Saeed Remains Alive but in Danger in Deadly Iranian Prison

For the first time since he was abruptly transferred from Evin Prison to Rajai Shahr Prison earlier this month, American **pastor Saeed Abedini** was allowed visitation with his Iranian family.

This is a positive sign that international pressure continues to work to keep Abedini alive. Abedini's Iranian family has, for the past two weeks since his transfer, been prevented from visiting him—something they had previously been permitted to do once a week during his imprisonment in Evin Prison.

It is also the first physical confirmation of Abedini's condition and life since his transfer to the brutal prison.

Abedini remains in the violent criminal ward—Ward 3—of Rajai Shahr, sharing a 3-meter-by-3-meter cell with other prisoners. This particular ward of the deadly prison holds some of the worst criminals in Iran: murderers and rapists.

International human rights organizations have reported that prisoner-on-prisoner violence, including murder, is routine at Rajai Shahr Prison.

Abedini's situation remains dire. However, we are encouraged that his Iranian family was allowed visitation—and that his Iranian family was able to see him face to face and communicate with him. Abedini, however, has yet to receive the medication he has been prescribed for internal injuries suffered at the hands of his captors.

We believe that **prayer** and strong international pressure—the outcry of hundreds of thousands of people around the world—are

keeping Pastor Saeed alive.

Last week the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution calling for the release of this U.S. citizen, and key members of the European Parliament wrote a letter raising Pastor Saeed's case.

A similar resolution is pending in the U.S. House of Representatives. The House Foreign Affairs Committee has announced it will take up the resolution (H. Res. 147) on Wednesday. These statements, resolutions and letters from U.S. and international government leaders are key to Abedini's case.

We must not allow him to be forgotten. We must not allow him to disappear.

We continue to urge President Obama—who has previously directly spoken out about Pastor Saeed's case—and the U.S. State Department to re-engage this issue at the highest levels. As international negotiations continue with Iran regarding its nuclear program, Abedini's freedom must be a chief concern. Human rights and specifically **religious freedom**—the first freedom—is a critical step forward for any nation on the world stage.

The time is now for Iran to release Abedini.

Add your name to the hundreds of thousands calling for Pastor Saeed's release at .