

Persecuted Pastor's Wife Set to Testify Before Congress

With an increase in the arrest, imprisonment and killing of religious and cultural minorities in Iran—approximately 300 Christians have been arbitrarily arrested and detained since June 2010—Congress will hold a hearing to address the continuing deterioration of religious freedom in Iran.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), which defends human rights and religious freedom, will testify Friday before the Congressional committee, focusing on the plight of American Pastor Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen imprisoned in Iran because of his Christian faith.

ACLJ Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow, ACLJ Executive Director Jordan Sekulow and Pastor Saeed's wife, Naghmeh, will testify Friday before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in the House, a bipartisan commission, which is co-chaired by Representatives James McGovern (D-MA) and Frank Wolf (R-VA).

The commission exists to “to promote, defend and advocate internationally recognized human rights norms in a nonpartisan manner, both within and outside of Congress, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights instruments.”

“We have seen tremendous support from more than 100 members of Congress who understand the growing problem of religious persecution and have called for the release of American Pastor Saeed Abedini,” said Jay Sekulow. “This hearing represents a significant opportunity to elevate Pastor Saeed's plight and to encourage our State Department and White House to engage this case at the highest levels.

“For a U.S. citizen to be facing years in one of Iran's most deadly prisons—beaten and abused daily—simply because of his

Christian faith, is unconscionable. We're grateful for the opportunity to present Pastor Saeed's case and stand up for the human rights and religious freedom of those who are facing similar situations because of their faith."

The ACLJ, which represents Pastor Saeed's wife, Naghmeh, and their two children who reside in the U.S., has launched a global effort—including presenting testimony before the U.N. Human Rights Council in an effort to secure his freedom. Nearly 450,000 people already have signed the petition demanding his release.

The hearing on Friday is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. and is open to the public and the news media. Additional details about the hearing can be found [here](#).