

White House Prayer Vigil Targets Persecuted Pastor's Release

The Christian Defense Coalition will ask President Obama to personally and publicly demand that the Iranian government immediately release Pastor Saeed Abedini.

The group is very troubled that President Obama has not yet embraced **religious freedom** and human rights for all by personally addressing this issue.

The prayer vigil, public witness and news conference will be held on Wednesday at 11:15 a.m. in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Ave.

To stand in solidarity with Pastor Saeed, an Iranian-born American citizen, and remind **President Obama** of his unjust imprisonment and persecution, some participants will risk arrest by tying a green ribbon around their wrists and attaching it to the White House fence.

This effort is part of an international campaign to free **Pastor Saeed**. Last Christmas the group organized a campaign called "Leave an Empty Place Setting Around the Table at Christmas for Pastor Saeed."

"Today, while we in America are waking up and enjoying our coffee, headed to schools and our daily work without a thought, are possibly annoyed at the traffic, or considering what we will choose to eat," says Katie Hennessey, spokesperson for the Christian Defense Coalition, "halfway across the world there is a young man who is being imprisoned and beaten for the crime of simply being a Christian and practicing his faith."

“And living in our nation, the same man’s wife and children anxiously await news as he is being mistreated and sentenced to years of brutal oppression without freedom—as fellow American citizens, how can we stand idly by and allow this to occur and do nothing?,” she adds.

“We who live in peace, abundance—and casually take for granted our incredible freedoms—must be compelled to, at the very least, be a voice against this atrocity and speak up!” notes the Rev. Patrick J. Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition. “It is deeply troubling and disturbing that a U.S. citizen would be imprisoned for eight years and brutally beaten in a foreign country for simply being a Christian.

“What is equally as troubling and disturbing is that President Obama has failed to personally and publicly address this issue and demand the immediate release of Pastor Saeed,” he continues. “President Obama’s silence on religious freedom and basic **human rights** sends a clear message to the world that these issues are not a top priority for this administration.

“We will gather in front of the White House, first to pray, and ask God to intervene and act on behalf of Pastor Saeed. Then we will stand as a ‘prophetic witness’ for justice reminding the president and the nation of Pastor Saeed’s imprisonment and persecution and the fact that we must never be silent on these issues,” Mahoney concludes.