



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

January 18, 2013

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

I am writing on behalf of Pastor Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen and Idaho resident with dual Iranian citizenship. Pastor Abedini is being held in Iran as persecution for espousing his Christian faith – a clear violation of his fundamental human right to the exercise of religious freedom.

The Iranian government alleges that Pastor Abedini practicing his Christian faith threatens Iran's national security. Given Iran's record of persecuting its Christian community, and with Pastor Abedini's trial scheduled for January 21st, I urge you to use all due haste in engaging with the international community to effect his release.

Pastor Abedini was detained by Iran's Revolutionary Guard on July 28, 2012, as he lawfully entered Iran from Turkey. Since then he has been systematically interrogated and abused by Revolutionary Guard personnel and repeatedly assaulted by Al Qaeda members while being held in the notorious Evin prison. Pastor Abedini has been denied legal counsel, had his passports confiscated and had his Iranian bank account confiscated of funds he planned to use to build an orphanage – all despite having broken no Iranian law.

This most recent outrage against Pastor Abedini comes despite the fact that he has fully complied with the terms of his release from Iranian custody during a 2009 visit to that country. Those conditions stipulated that he cease his work with underground Christian churches in Iran. Pastor Abedini's subsequent work in Iran has focused on humanitarian efforts.

The practice of religious freedom is guaranteed under the Iranian Constitution, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory. Swift action is urgently needed to assist this U.S. citizen, in keeping with your consistent and welcome condemnation of the Iranian regime's actions that violate religious freedoms. The unjustified and arbitrary persecution of Pastor Abedini is of the utmost concern to the citizens of Idaho, and your timely attention to its resolution is greatly appreciated.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.L. Butch Otter".

CLO/mw

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho