



November 4, 2013

VIA OVERNIGHT DELIVERY SERVICE

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On Sunday, November 3, 2013, Pastor Saeed Abedini, an American citizen currently imprisoned in Iran for his Christian faith, was transferred from the Evin Prison, a notorious prison for political prisoners in Tehran, to the even more notorious and brutal Rajai Shahr Prison in Karaj, a prison where the most violent criminals are incarcerated. Pastor Saeed has been placed in a 3m by 3m cell (approximately 10ft by 10ft) with five other inmates in the ward reserved for murderers and rapists. In 2005, a diplomat from the Dutch embassy in Tehran described the Rajai Shahr Prison as follows:

Rajai Shahr is the place where political prisoners who are seen as a nuisance, are stowed away. Going to Karaj [the location of the prison] is a severe punishment. Once in there one stops to be a human being. One is put out of sight, even of human rights activists and the press. In Rajai Shahr, political prisoners have to share cells with dangerous criminals like murderers, rapists and drug addicts who don't hesitate to attack their cell mates. They have nothing to lose: many of them are condemned to death anyway. Murders or unexplained deaths are a regular occurrence.¹

This transfer appears intended to put Pastor Saeed's life in even greater danger. Transferring Pastor Saeed without any prior notice to a prison where the most violent Iranian criminals are incarcerated and where violence among criminals is commonplace appears designed to afford the

¹<http://www.enduringamerica.com/september-2010/2010/9/6/updated-iran-feature-inside-rajai-shahr-prison-bijnen.html>.



Iranian regime political cover should Pastor Saeed be either severely injured or killed by fellow inmates.

Mr. President, in September of this year, you spoke with Iranian President Rouhani by phone, urging him, *inter alia*, to release Pastor Saeed. That was a very welcome development regarding Pastor Saeed's plight. This new and extremely dangerous development is deeply troubling and once again requires the intervention of the Administration at the highest levels.

In light of the increased physical danger to Pastor Saeed because of his transfer to the Rajai Shahr Prison, we respectfully urge you and Secretary of State John Kerry to speak out now—directly and forcefully—to save Pastor Saeed's life.

Mr. President, time is of the essence in this matter. Pastor Saeed needs our help today, before it is too late.

Respectfully yours,



Jay Alan Sekulow
Chief Counsel



Robert W. Ash
Senior Counsel