



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary for Democracy,
Human Rights, and Labor*

Washington, D.C. 20520-7827

September 23, 2013

Mrs. Naghmeh Abedini



Dear Mrs. Abedini:

Thank you for your August 13 invitation letter to Secretary Kerry for the vigil for your husband on September 26.

As the anniversary of Pastor Abedini's detention nears, I wish to express the Department of State's support for you and your family. As you commemorate this difficult anniversary, our hearts and thoughts are with you.

Your husband's welfare, and that of all U.S. citizens detained unjustly overseas, remains among our highest priorities. Moreover, our support for freedom of religion for adherents of all faiths throughout the world is a central component of our foreign policy. We continue to pursue all diplomatic avenues to press Iran for Pastor Abedini's release, including the Secretary's August 28 statement to the Iranian government. We will do so until he returns safely to you and your family.

I regret that we will be unable to join you in Idaho for the vigil. However, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Jane Zimmerman will represent the Department of State at the vigil on September 26 in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. government stands with you in your efforts to raise awareness of the treatment of your husband and other religious minorities in Iran.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Kozak
Acting Assistant Secretary