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IRAN | Pastor Abedini Moved to Solitary Confinement

Pastor Saeed Abedini, a convert to Christianity with dual United States/Iranian nationality who was sentenced to eight years in prison in January for “actions against the national security of Iran,” has been placed in solitary confinement.

According to Mohabat News, Pastor Abedini had taken part in a peaceful courtyard protest over the mistreatment of inmates in Evin Prison, where he is currently being held. The protest reportedly angered prison officials who, subsequently, put Pastor Abedini and nine other prisoners in solitary confinement. Pastor Abedini had also signed a petition which criticized the lack of medical care for prisoners and the mistreatment of their families during visits.

Pastor Abedini is reportedly suffering severe internal bleeding as a result of receiving regular beatings in prison and there are concerns his kidneys may not be functioning properly. He has been refused medical treatment by prison authorities. Furthermore, family members were turned away from their weekly visit and informed that he was no longer permitted to receive any visitors.

Pastor Abedini was arrested in September 2012 while in Iran on a family visit. On Jan. 27, he was sentenced to eight years imprisonment by the Revolutionary Court Branch 26 in Tehran on charges of “planting house churches that are intended to undermine national security.”

Although couched in political terms, the charges against Pastor Abedini are linked to his conversion from Islam to Christianity. Christians in Iran are increasingly facing such charges as a means of justifying arbitrary arrests and extreme sentences.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “CSW is deeply concerned at reports of Pastor Abedini’s deteriorating health, and that he is being held in solitary confinement despite urgently needing medical attention. His case is reminiscent of that of [Pastor Irani](#), who is also being denied adequate medical care for severe health challenges. We urge the Iranian authorities to provide immediate medical care for Pastor Abedini and Pastor Irani, and to release them and all

other prisoners who, in reality, are being held on account of their faith. The freedom to profess one's faith is protected in the Iranian constitution as well as in various international treaties to which Iran is signatory, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We therefore call on Iran to fulfill its legal obligations and uphold this right for all of its citizens."