

# Update: Saeed and Naghmeh Abedini

## Prayer Vigil in New Jersey Remembers Imprisoned Pastor

Story by Christmas Beeler



**Katy and Diana Hernandez give Naghmeh Abedini, right, a letter.**

Photo by David Ducane

Three years after the Iranian government imprisoned Pastor Saeed Abedini for sharing Christ, his wife Naghmeh attended a massive prayer gathering at Calvary Chapel Old Bridge, NJ. She thanked his intercessors: “Your prayers are carrying him through his darkest hour.”

Saeed, 35, is serving an eight-year jail term on charges of attempting to undermine the Iranian government through his involvement with house churches in Iran from 2000-2005. An American citizen since 2010, he has suffered numerous beatings, torture, solitary confinements, and untreated medical injuries in jail.

“He’s had a hard week,” Naghmeh said to the crowd of approximately 750 people from more than a dozen churches. “They’ve interrogated him; they’ve tasered him. They’ve brought up new charges to extend his sentence.” Saeed’s torturers used a taser gun on

his head, reported the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ); such use has been known to cause brain injury.

Most painful for him is the separation from their children: Rebekka, 8, and Jacob, 7. “They [his torturers] have held up pictures of our children, saying, ‘You could go home and be with your family if you would just renounce Christ.’ For him, that has been the biggest torture—watching his children grow up from behind a glass window, only seeing photos,” Naghmeh said. “The mornings are the most difficult because he often dreams about being home with us, then wakes up to the harsh reality of still being in prison.”

“The Iranian government is frustrated with him because not only does he refuse to deny his faith, but also he is sharing his faith,” she said, pausing amidst applause. “Saeed’s not doing it out of defiance but because of love for those prisoners. Some of those inmates on death row have found hope in Christ. One man told his family that he doesn’t feel imprisoned anymore; he feels free.” Others who have accepted Christ through Saeed’s witness include prison guards and officials, and medical workers who treated his injuries, Naghmeh said. “They transferred him from his first prison, Evin Prison, because so many people had come to know Christ,” she explained. He was exiled to Rajai Shahr in Karaj, Iran, and put in the ward with murderers and rapists, though he is a political prisoner. “The head of the ward said there was no way he would survive this prison. If the inmates found out he was a convert to

Christianity, they would kill him. By God’s grace he was covered with lice at first, then threatened with knives. These men started to have dreams and visions of Jesus. They accepted Christ, and then they began to protect Saeed.”

Naghmeh also praised God for open doors to share Christ. In late September, she spoke before more than 100 parliamentarians from nearly 50 countries. Naghmeh related, “The Lord, through prayer and fasting, gave me this boldness: I told them that, all of the world’s problems they are trying to solve, God already gave us the solution in the cross. God gave me the boldness to give an invitation to these parliament leaders to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.” Following her presentation, 67 parliamentarians signed a letter to the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament calling for Saeed’s release, according to the ACLJ.



**Saeed Abedini**  
Courtesy of ACLJ

She asked that believers continue to intercede for Saeed and their family, as well as the persecuted church worldwide. “There have been times I have wanted to give up, but your encouragement and your prayers have pulled me through.” 🙏

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