Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2011

Dear Secretary Clinton,

We write to you on behalf of Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, an Iranian Christian pastor who was convicted of apostasy and currently faces execution. We are painfully aware of Iran's history of carrying out executions before releasing formal decisions to the public and fear his execution could be imminent. Accordingly, it is with great urgency that we request your swift engagement with the international community to advocate for his release.

Pastor Nadarkhani was arrested on October 13, 2009, after attempting to invoke his rights under the Iranian Constitution to educate his children according to his family's religious teachings. In September 2010, a state court convicted Pastor Nadarkhani and sentenced him to death by hanging. In June 2011, the Iranian Supreme Court upheld the conviction and death sentence and returned the case to the state court for further investigation. In September 2011, the state court demanded three times that Pastor Nadarkhani recant his faith or die. Each time, he replied, "I cannot."

Pastor Nadarkhani's conviction violates numerous domestic laws and international obligations. Articles 13, 14 and 23 of the Iranian Constitution guarantee his right to freely practice his religion of choice. Furthermore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which Iran is a party to, firmly secure one's right to practice their religion of choice.

We are grateful for your condemnation of the Iranian regime's actions in this case, as well as the White House's statement calling for the release of Pastor Nadarkhani. We agree that a full and unconditional release is necessary and respectfully ask you to use all the powers at your disposal to accomplish that end as swiftly as possible. We believe your voice can motivate entities within the United Nations to action, including the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Additionally, we would like to see the Secretary General of both the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation come to Pastor Nadarkhani's defense. We implore you to take action to engage these entities to save this innocent man's life.

We understand the numerous and complex challenges you face, but it is the most sacred duty to protect innocent human life. We implore you to raise your voice at this critical juncture on behalf of Pastor Nadarkhani. We must not stand by while the Iranian regime executes a man who has committed no crime. Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter. We eagerly await word of your actions.

Respectfully,

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