

NGO name: European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ)

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The ECLJ would like to express its support to the Special Rapporteur Ahmed Shaheed for his Report, and to thank him, as well as Australia and the European Union for raising the plight of Pastor Saeed Abedini.

The ECLJ would like to bring to your attention the case of Pastor Saeed Abedini who is currently jailed in Iran because of his faith.

In Saeed's case, Iran has violated numerous international obligations, especially the rights to freedom of religion and peaceful assembly, the right to a fair trial before an impartial tribunal, and the prohibition of torture and ill treatments.

Arrested during his visit to Iran to build a non-sectarian orphanage, for children of all religions, Iranian authorities incarcerated Saeed in Evin prison and sentenced him to eight years imprisonment, Although his official charge was cloaked as a national security concern, Pastor Saeed was put on trial solely because of his religious, peaceful and humanitarian activities.

Pastor Saeed's imprisonment is a clear violation of the rule of law and of his fundamental right to exercise his religion of choice.

Pastor Saeed Abenini's imprisonment is also a clear violation of his right to a "*fair and public hearing . . . by an independent and impartial tribunal.*" Yet, Saeed and his attorney were excluded from the entire second day of his trial, and Saeed was unable to meet with his attorney until mere hours before the trial began. Further, Judge Pir-Abassi, who presided over Pastor Saeed's case, has been sanctioned by the European Union for various human rights abuses during the 2009 events.

Pastor Saeed has been repeatedly beaten and subjected to intense interrogations, he has been deprived of sleep and is suffering from internal bleeding. He has been denied access to proper medical care, his is threatened with death all because he converted to the Christian faith.

These violations must be addressed. The ECLJ recommends that the HRC condemn every practice that prevents individuals from freely choosing and practicing their religion, and requests that Pastor Saeed receives the proper medical care and be released immediately!