

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 22, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
2201 C St NW Ste 7276  
Washington DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write regarding a matter of grave concern—namely the possible execution of Youcef Nadarkhani, an Iranian man who faces the death penalty if he refuses to recant his Christian faith.

According to a July 17 *Voice of America* story, “Mr. Nadarkhani was arrested in his home city of Rasht on October 13, 2009, while attempting to register his church after protesting compulsory Islamic religious instruction in Iranian public schools. Christian Solidarity Worldwide, a human rights group, reports that he was originally charged with protesting, however, the charges against the 32-year-old convert to Christianity were later changed to apostasy and evangelizing Muslims.”

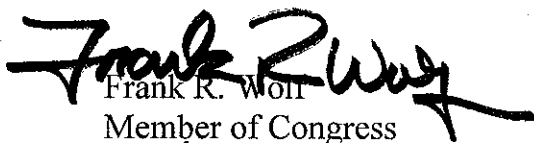
While we were encouraged to see the State Department’s statement on July 6, highlighting the injustice of this case, it is clear that more must be done. It is our understanding that Mr. Nadarkhani’s case has been remanded to a lower court for additional findings of fact to prove whether he was a Muslim between the ages of 15 and 19. At his original trial, Mr. Nadarkhani testified that although born to a Muslim family, he never accepted the faith. Unfortunately, many Shari’a law experts and the pending criminal laws in Iran interpret Shari’a law to impute Islam onto any child born to a Muslim parent, regardless of whether the child accepts the faith. We further understand that there is no guarantee that Mr. Nadarkhani’s execution will not be carried out even before the lower court reviews the matter. In short, Mr. Nadarkhani’s life still hangs in the balance and further intervention is needed.


We noted your recent remarks before the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), where you spoke of certain “fundamental freedoms that belong to all people in all places.” Clearly the ability to worship according to the dictates of your conscience is foremost among those fundamental freedoms. Given Iran’s membership in the OIC, we urge you to personally engage the OIC at the highest levels, specifically OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, and press him to work for Mr. Nadarkhani’s immediate and unconditional release.

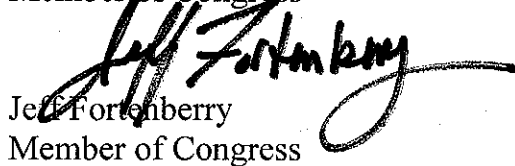
Iran has a miserable record when it comes to respecting the rights of religious minorities. This case is just the latest example in a long list of deplorable abuses that are worthy of high-level U.S. engagement and advocacy.

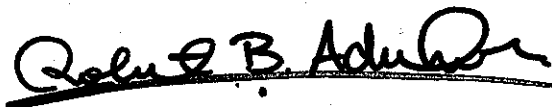
Best wishes.

Sincerely,


  
Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress

  
Chris Smith  
Member of Congress

  
Jeff Fortenberry  
Member of Congress

  
Robert Aderholt  
Member of Congress

  
Trent Franks  
Member of Congress

  
Joseph R. Pitts  
Member of Congress

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