

AMERICAN SIAMAK NAMAZI MARKS FIVE YEARS AS A HOSTAGE OF IRAN

Washington, D.C. – Today is the fifth anniversary of the Iranian Government’s arbitrary arrest of American Iranian dual national Siamak Namazi.

On October 13, 2015, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps arrested Siamak for alleged collusion with the United States without presenting an arrest warrant or any formal evidence. Since that time, he has been held in Iran’s notorious Evin Prison, where he has been subjected to torture and prolonged periods of solitary confinement. In a sham trial in October 2016, Siamak was sentenced to ten years in prison for collaboration with a hostile foreign government – the United States – alongside his elderly father Baquer Namazi, who was arrested in February 2016 when he attempted to visit his son in prison.

“The past five years have been an unimaginable nightmare,” said Siamak’s brother Babak Namazi. “I cannot describe how agonizing and painful it is to sit helplessly by while you hear that your brother has been tortured, is in an infected petri dish or that your father’s health continues to deteriorate because of Iran’s neglect. I would never wish that kind of pain on anyone. Every time I hear from them, I fear it will be the last.”

Siamak’s life remains in grave danger. The Iranian judiciary has repeatedly denied his requests for a temporary furlough despite granting or extending furloughs for around 120,000 other prisoners since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Now, Iran is bringing back prisoners in large numbers, even though the country hit a record high number of infections just last week. Siamak has already been exposed to the deadly virus multiple times and heightened overcrowding in the dangerous conditions of Evin Prison exponentially increases his likelihood of contracting it. Although Baquer is no longer in prison due to his health, his life also continues to be at serious risk. Now 84 years old, he is suffering from several life-threatening health problems, yet Iran refuses to permit him to travel abroad to seek the medical care he so desperately needs.

“The detention of Siamak Namazi has always been, and continues to be, a cruel ploy by Iran to gain political leverage against the United States,” stated Jared Genser, the Namazi family’s pro bono counsel. “The fact that he has been held hostage for five years now is a clear demonstration of Iran’s utter disregard for both international law and human life. We demand that Iran release Siamak from prison immediately and allow both him and Baquer to return safely to the United States. We also urge all world leaders to pressure Iran to end its barbaric practice of hostage taking. No family should have to go through what the Namazis have suffered in these last five years.”

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