

MEDIA RELEASE

FEBRUARY 6, 2018

**AMERICAN HOSTAGE BAQUER NAMAZI RETURNED TO IRAN'S EVIN PRISON  
AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS OF GOVERNMENT'S OWN MEDICAL  
EXAMINER**

Washington - Just hours ago, on Tuesday, February 6, 2018, Baquer Namazi, 81-years-old, was abruptly returned to Evin Prison after a short medical leave. This decision was made against the advice of his doctors and finding of the Iranian government's own Medical Examiner who, after examining Namazi, recommended a minimum additional three-month leave on medical grounds.

"Iran's decision against the advice of its own doctors to send Baquer Namazi back to Evin Prison is a shocking development and is tantamount to a death sentence that will be imposed quickly," said Jared Genser, the Namazi family lawyer.

"I am stunned and horrified that my father has been sent back to Evin Prison. How can the Iranian authorities knowingly risk my father's life knowing it will end in a tragedy? What could they be trying to achieve?" said Babak Namazi, Baquer's son. "Now, more than ever, I desperately need President Trump to spare no efforts to bring my father and brother Siamak, who is also wrongly imprisoned, home," he added.

Baquer Namazi provided private message for friends and former UNICEF colleagues, which Babak Namazi decided to make public, below.

On January 15, 2018, Namazi was rushed to the hospital after a severe drop in blood pressure and irregular heartbeat. It was the fourth time Namazi had been hospitalized in the last year and he underwent emergency heart surgery to install a pacemaker last September.

After Namazi's doctors strongly advised against returning him to Evin Prison, saying that the prison conditions were "extremely dangerous" and were exacerbating his deteriorating health, he was granted a four-day medical leave beginning on January 28, 2018. On February 1, he was told to report to the Government of Iran's Medical Examiner on February 4, and that his leave would be extended until then. The Government's Medical Examiner recommended Namazi be granted an initial three-month leave on medical grounds, and did not rule out the possibility that a longer extension would be necessary. Today he received a call ordering he report back to Evin Prison.

Baquer Namazi's international counsel, Jared Genser, warned "Returning Baquer Namazi to prison against the recommendations of all his attending medical professionals is a reckless and dangerous course of action that could cost the 81-year-old his life. It is not in Iran's best interest if Baquer Namazi dies in prison. I urge his immediate release on humanitarian grounds."

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## **Statement of Baquer Namazi**

February 6, 2018

To my friends and UNICEF colleagues around the world,

You know not how heart warming and encouraging your support has been for me and my agonized family, especially for my wife Effie and son Babak.

Despite the pain inflicted upon my family and myself, I have not lost hope and continue to pray for the great humanitarian causes for which we have all dedicated our lives. To overcome the formidable challenges, much sacrifice is needed and I am willing to be one of the victims with the hope that the pain will not be in vain.

The powers that be have directed me to return to prison today despite the strong recommendation of Iran's medical examiner and my physicians that my health cannot withstand further incarceration.

My son Siamak has suffered far more than myself and pays the price for standing up for the right of Iranian people to life saving medicine, previously denied by sanctions.

While the pain of those dearest to me continues to hurt deeply, I am also sorry that with the help of all of you and other great humanitarians that I could not continue to serve our common cause of peace for children, especially in the sorely troubled Middle East region, elimination of poverty through people empowerment, combatting child trafficking and opening space to hear the voices of the poor.

Sustaining these great causes will be the best reward that can, God willing, be granted to this humble man.

I thank you all and I am greatly strengthened morally and otherwise by your efforts to promote justice and bring about freedom for my son and me.

God bless you all.

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