

**For Immediate Release  
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**Open Letter, Senate Resolution Speak Out for Human Rights in Iran**

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**Edmond Baha'i Faith**

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Edmond Baha'is are hopeful this Holiday season that mounting international outcry and an open letter from their international community to the government of Iran, may help release the seven Baha'i prisoners soon. The five men and two women who have been in prison for more than two years now, served as the head of the Iranian Baha'i community before being detained in 2008.

Last week, U.S. Senator Sam Brownback introduced a resolution condemning Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights. S.Res.694 is currently pending before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Additionally, on Tuesday, December 7, the Baha'i International Community published an open letter to Ayatollah Mohammad Sadeq Larijani, the head of Iran's judiciary, stating that Iran's treatment of Baha'is is a critical litmus test for the government's commitment to justice: "How can a just society, or a just world, be built on a foundation of irrational oppression and the systematic denial of basic human rights to any minority? Everything your country overtly professes to seek on the world stage is contradicted by your treatment of your own people at home."

In the months leading up to the Senate resolution's introduction, Baha'is throughout the United States engaged in a systematic effort to inform U.S. Senators and Representatives of the ongoing persecution of Baha'is in Iran. The Oklahoma delegation has supported previous resolutions condemning the actions of the Iran in regards to human rights issues and specifically the Iranian Baha'is. Beginning in September, Baha'is visited with the members of the delegation to further update and thank them on the situation.

"We are deeply appreciative of the efforts of the Oklahoma delegation on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Iran and for the time they have given to this very important issue," said Terri Angier, spokesperson for the Edmond Baha'i community. "Oklahoma Baha'is are greatly grateful to Senator Inhofe who is a co-sponsor of the resolution and an advocate of human rights issues."

Oklahoma City metro area Baha'i communities have held many prayer gatherings and 24-hour vigils for the imprisoned Baha'is in the past few years which have been attended by hundreds of Baha'is and friends alike.

These two recent events were planned in conjunction with International Human Rights Day, December 10, and specifically call for the release of seven Baha'is, who were arrested on false charges stemming from their roles administering to the basic needs of Iran's Baha'i community. Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm were arrested in the spring of 2008 and held in Evin prison in Tehran for nearly two years before their trial began. In August 2010 each of the defendants was sentenced to 20 years in prison—later reduced to 10 years. They are currently being held in Gohardasht prison in Karaj, one of Iran's worst prisons.

Today, there are more than 50 Baha'is imprisoned in Iran with baseless or no charges, purely for practicing their religion.

For more information, please see <http://iran.bahai.us>, [www.bahai.us](http://www.bahai.us) or [www.edmondbahai.org](http://www.edmondbahai.org)

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**Contact: Terri Angier at (405) 348-8322 for local interviews or if you need additional information on the story.**

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