



National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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****MEDIA ADVISORY****

BELIEF BEHIND BARS: RECEPTION FOR IRAN'S SEVEN IMPRISONED BAHAI LEADERS

Remarks from special guests:

U.S. Senator Mark Kirk

U.S. Rep. Michael Grimm

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kathleen Fitzpatrick

Iraj Kamalabadi, brother of imprisoned Baha'i in Iran

CSI Miami star Eva LaRue

Musical performances:

Grammy-award winner KC Porter with Badi and Momo Loudiyi

When: Thursday, May 12, 2011, 5:30 p.m. EST

Where: 902 Hart Senate Office Building [***WATCH LIVE!***](#)

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WASHINGTON—Concern in the U.S. government is growing as the incarceration of the seven members of the Iranian Baha'i community's former acting leadership group moves into its fourth year. The five men continue to be held in Gohardasht Prison under close surveillance, while the two women were transferred early Tuesday morning to a warehouse-like detention center where more than 400 female prisoners share just two bathrooms.

Meanwhile, the Baha'is of the United States – in upholding their faith's teachings of justice, unity and equality for which their co-religionists in Iran are persecuted – invite all supporters of human rights to a reception marking the third anniversary of the unlawful incarceration of the seven "Yaran-i-Iran" (Friends in Iran).

The reception aims to foster stronger ties of friendship between the people of the U.S. and Iran, through song and words of supports from special guests including: Grammy-award winning musician KC Porter; U.S. Senator Mark Kirk (IL); U.S. Representative Michael Grimm (NY);

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Kathleen Fitzpatrick; Iranian-American engineer Iraj Kamalabadi, brother of imprisoned Iranian Baha'i leader Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi; and CSI Miami star Eva LaRue.

Director of the U.S. Baha'i Office of External Affairs in Washington, Anthony Vance, will host the reception, the latest in a series of events on Capitol Hill to raise awareness among U.S. lawmakers and human rights groups about the continued persecution of the Baha'is in Iran.

"Our efforts to scrutinize and oppose human rights violations against the Baha'is of Iran and all the Iranian people will never cease or dissipate," Vance said.

Iranian-American Iraj Kamalabadi, whose sister Fariba is one of the seven imprisoned Baha'i leaders, will make his third trip in three months to Washington on behalf of his younger sibling to deliver the closing remarks in the reception program.

"My sister has told me to tell the leaders of the world that if there is something that could be done, now is the time to do it," he said.

Kamalabadi attended Senator Kirk's May 4th press conference introducing legislation on human right in Iran.

"As Americans," Sen. Kirk said in a press release following the introduction of his new bill, "we should speak directly to the people of Iran struggling for freedom and democracy and let them know we stand squarely by their side."

Senator Kirk will open the program with remarks and the event will be webcast live on his LiveStream account. Following him in the program are Grimm, Fitzpatrick, LaRue and Kamalabadi, and a performance by Porter of a song he wrote for the imprisoned Baha'i leaders.

LaRue and Porter are Baha'i performance artists based in Southern California. As a woman and mother of a nine-year-old daughter, LaRue was moved by the courageous spirit of Fariba Kamalabadi and Mahvash Sabet, whose separation from their children is entering the fourth year and who continue to endure further deteriorating conditions of their incarceration.

On April 28, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom ([USCIRF](#)) released its [2011 Annual Report](#). The report describes – beginning on page 78 – several cases of the "severe" persecution the Baha'i community in Iran faced from April 2010 to March 2011. Iran is one of 14 countries USCIRF recommends that the Secretary of State name "countries of particular concern" or CPCs.

In early March, Kirk [introduced](#) S.Res.80 condemning the Iranian government for its state-sponsored persecution of Iran's 300,000 Baha'is and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights. The bill (and H.Res. 134 in the House) calls for sanctioning Iranian government officials and other individuals directly responsible for human rights violations in Iran, including against the Baha'i community.

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