

# February 21, 2008: Public Hearing on Advancing Religious Freedom and Related Human Rights in Iran

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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--Event Advisory--

Public Hearing

Advancing Religious Freedom and Related Human Rights in Iran:

Strategies for an Effective U.S. Policy

Thursday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2359

The U.S. State Department has designated Iran a Country of Particular Concern for its egregious and systematic violations of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief. The situation has deteriorated in particular for religious minorities, including Baha'is, Sufis and Evangelical Christians. Fears of repression have grown in the Jewish community as a result of increased anti-Semitic expression coming from the government and state-controlled media. Dissidents and political reformers continue to be imprisoned on criminal charges of blasphemy and for criticizing the Islamic regime. A number of senior Shi'a religious leaders who have opposed religious and/or political tenets of the Iranian government have also been targets of state repression.

The Commission will hear testimony from an array of distinguished witnesses on human rights abuses in Iran, current U.S. policy, and potential avenues for more effectively addressing rights violations in the Islamic Republic. Confirmed witnesses are:

Panel I:

- Jeffrey Feltman, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs

Panel II:

- Barbara Slavin, Senior Fellow, U.S. Institute of Peace & Senior Diplomatic Reporter, USA Today
- Suzanne Maloney, Senior Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institution

Panel III:

- Payam Akhavan, Co-Founder, Iran Human Rights Documentation Center & Professor of Law, McGill University
- Roya Boroumand, Executive Director, Boroumand Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in Iran
- Paul Marshall, Senior Fellow, Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute

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