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Leonard Leo, the chair of the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom**, called Iran's treatment of the Bahai community "outrageous" and supported intensified pressure by the United States.

Leo pointed to the Iran Sanctions Act signed last year by President Barack Obama. The law takes aim at Iranians involved in human rights abuses, adding the issue to US concerns with the Islamic republic such as its nuclear program.

"There are many other things, hopefully, that we can do in waging a broad-based campaign to stop the repression and to defend the rights of not only your family members and brethren but any other Bahais," Leo said.