

FRW 1

Extension of Remarks
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of Virginia
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Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, a recent Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (REF/RL) article featured comments from Iranian-American journalist Roxana Saberi who spent 100 days in Iran's notorious Evin prison between February and May 2009 on espionage charges.

Saberi indicated that the day of her release was bittersweet saying, "As they drove me away, I remember turning my head to the side and seeing the prison disappear behind me. And finally, I cried...I realized, however, that my tears were not just tears of joy, but they were also tears of sorrow for the many innocent prisoners I was leaving behind. Why was I freed while all these others are still there?"

Among those she was leaving behind were the two female Baha'i leaders who have been in jail for more than two years on baseless charges -- Fariba Kamalabadi and Mahvash Sabet.

There are news reports that these two, in addition to the five male Baha'i leaders, are scheduled to have their fourth court session on Saturday, June 12—the same day as the anniversary of Iran's deeply flawed presidential election.

The RFE/RL article continues, "Saberi believes the media attention and international support she received during her ordeal led to her release."

Saberi's comments are consistent with the reflections of dissidents dating back to the Cold War. Time and again those who are unjustly languishing in prison have reported that their lives improved in captivity when President Reagan and others raised their cases by name. And some instances, their freedom followed soon thereafter.

The U.S. and the rest of the free world must continue to speak with one voice about the deplorable human rights situation in Iran. We must continue to advocate for due process and a fair trial for these seven Baha'i leaders and for basic rights for the community as a whole which according to the recently released report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "has long been subject to particularly severe religious violations in Iran."

The world cannot turn a blind eye to this regime's brutal repression of its own people.