

February 22, 2022
MEDIA RELEASE

AMERICAN HOSTAGE BAQUER NAMAZI MARKS SIX YEARS SINCE HIS ARREST

Washington, D.C. – Six years ago today, Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) wrongfully arrested Baquer Namazi, 85. Although Iranian authorities closed his case and commuted his sentence in early 2020, they have illegally refused to allow him to travel abroad to reunite with his family and seek medical treatment.

In 2016, after months of trying to see his son Siamak – who had been detained *incommunicado* since October 2015 – Baquer was informed that he had been granted access to Evin Prison, but only for February 24. Although he was traveling abroad at the time, he immediately booked a flight back to Tehran. When his flight landed on February 22, 2016, he was intercepted by the IRGC and arrested. In a sham trial in October 2016, Baquer and Siamak were both convicted of “collaboration with a hostile foreign government” – the United States – and sentenced to ten years in prison.

Despite his already poor health, Baquer was regularly denied proper medical treatment in prison and endured prolonged solitary confinement and psychological torture. Following over a dozen hospitalizations and two emergency surgeries, he was placed on a highly restrictive medical furlough in 2018. However, his health has continued to decline at home. He developed stress-induced, adult-onset epilepsy and depression; is easily fatigued and often confused; and has difficulty walking and maintaining his balance.

In early 2020, Baquer was informed that the Iranian Revolutionary Courts had commuted his sentence to time served and the bail he had posted for his medical furlough was released. Despite this decision, Iranian authorities have kept him under an arbitrary international travel ban, even in the face of life-threatening medical emergencies. In fall 2021, Baquer was [forced](#) to undergo a carotid endarterectomy to clear near-total blockages in the main arteries to his brain in Iran, where the stressful environment, poor aftercare, and widespread Covid-19 infections posed serious risks to his life.

Remarking on Baquer’s circumstances, the Namazi family’s pro bono international counsel, Jared Genser, stated: “Even within Iran’s disturbing history of hostage-taking, Baquer’s case stands out as particularly cruel. Iranian authorities manipulated a father’s love for his child to lure him into their grasp. And despite being intimately aware of all Baquer’s health problems from the moment they arrested him, Iranian officials have knowingly and consistently acted against the advice of medical experts – including their own. Their lack of regard for human life is astonishing and a gross violation of their obligations under international law.”

Siamak Namazi, 50, remains in Evin Prison, along with two other American hostages: Morad Tahbaz and Emad Shargi. With negotiations in Vienna drawing to a close, both U.S. and Iranian officials have addressed the issue of American hostages in the media. U.S. Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley [stated](#) that it would be difficult to imagine entering a deal with Americans

still wrongfully held in Iran, while Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian [expressed](#) that Iran is ready to engage in a prisoner swap immediately.

Babak Namazi, Baquer's son and Siamak's brother, said: "I cannot capture in words how deeply it pains me to be denied the simple ability to embrace my father for so long, and to see my children grow up without their grandfather by their side. I am begging President Biden to do everything in his power to bring him and my brother home to us. The U.S. must not end the negotiations or sign onto any deal without first securing the freedom of all the American hostages. Doing either would be devastating and likely deadly, especially for my 85-year-old father."

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