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P R E S S R E L E A S E

Eni F.H. Faleomavaega
Chairman

The Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington, D.C.

**FALEOMAVAEGA STANDS WITH PEOPLE OF BAHAI FAITH
IN OPPOSING RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION**

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that as of February 26, 2009 he cosponsored H. Res. 175, a resolution introduced by Congressman Mark Kirk of Illinois, condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

"I want our people in American Samoa of the Baha'i faith to know that I stand with them in opposing religious persecution of any kind," Faleomavaega said. "Iran must be held accountable for targeting people solely on the basis of their religion and for arresting and imprisoning them without due process."

"Even Mrs. Shirin Ebadi, a Nobel Laureate who is also the lawyer for seven of those recently arrested by Iran, has been denied all access to the prisoners and their files. This is wrong and the international community and the U.S. Congress must make their voices heard."

“I commend Congressman Kirk for offering H. Res. 175 which now has 30 cosponsors. Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon has also introduced a Senate companion bill. Given that this issue is now before the House and Senate, I am hopeful that Congress will take action and send a strong signal to Iran that religious persecution will not be tolerated by the United States or the international community.”

“As this legislation moves forward, I will also continue to do everything I can to make my voice heard on behalf of those living in American Samoa who are of the Baha’i faith,” Faleomavaega concluded.

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