

“On His 4th Freedom Anniversary, Hostage Aid and SPEHA Honor Former Hostage and HAW President Nizar Zakka”



June 15, 2023 – June 11, 2023 marked the fourth freedom anniversary of Hostage Aid Worldwide president and former hostage Nizar Zakka. To commemorate this occasion, HAW members and former hostages Alan Gross and Xiyue Wang, and board member Ali Arab proudly presented Nizar with a challenge coin in recognition and appreciation of all the suffering he endured.

US Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, Roger Carstens also presented Nizar with the special “SPEHA” challenge coin. The event took place in Washington DC in the presence of friends and colleagues. Touching video messages sent from former hostages and families around the world celebrating Nizar's freedom anniversary were also shared during the evening.

Nizar Zakka was kidnapped on September 18, 2015 by the IRGC after speaking at a conference in Tehran to which the Iranian Government officially invited him to participate in. He was falsely accused of being a US spy and sentenced to 10 years of prison based on a sham trial.

Upon his release on June 11, 2019, Nizar refused to allow his incarceration to break him. Instead, it gave him a fierce determination to fight for others unlawfully detained around the world. Together with a group of former hostages and subject matter experts, he established Hostage Aid Worldwide after experiencing first hand the pain, suffering, and betrayal that comes with being an innocent hostage held by a terrorist regime.

Nizar was honored for his courage and perseverance in the face of the injustice he experienced as well as his commitment to advocate for others still wrongfully detained and support their families.



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