



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in IRAN

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated
- since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



Iran

Total Population: 83,992,949

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 0.5% – **Evangelical Witness: 0.1%**

Largest Religion: Muslim - 97%

Death Rate: 5.30/1000 per year: Just today: 1,220

Iranian Christians Face Continued Legal Harrassment

05/05/2021 Iran (International Christian Concern) - Two high-profile Christian cases have made their way to Iran's Supreme Court while four other Christian converts were temporarily released and one more received a 10-month prison sentence.

The first case being considered by the Supreme Court for retrial is the prison sentences of Homayoun Zhavah and Sara Ahmadi. Homayoun is 62 years old and has advanced Parkinson's disease and was given a sentence of two years. His wife Sara, 43 years old, was given eight years. Both are currently serving their sentences in Tehran.

The second case being considered is the removal of a young girl from her two adoptive parents, Sam Khosravi and Maryam Falahi. The parents adopted two-year-old Lydia and because they are Christian converts, the courts decided to remove her from their care since she is considered Muslim. Though Lydia is still with her adoptive parents, she could be taken from them any day now that the court's decision has been made.

Regarding the potential for these cases to be heard by the Supreme Court, Article 18's Mansour Borji said, "Just to know that the highest court in the land now has the power to rule in these cases is something to be thankful for, because even should the Supreme Court reject these cases - either now, or following a retrial - it would mean the Iranian regime would be forced to take responsibility for these unjust verdicts, and therefore leave them with no leg to stand on if they continue to claim that Christians enjoy equal rights and that no-one is persecuted on account of their beliefs in Iran."

Four Christian converts, Ismail Narimanpour, Mohammad Ali Torabi, Alireza Vark Shah, and Hojjat Lotfi Khalaf, were arrested on April 19 and only held for two days' detention before being released. Their release was conditional on the four signing commitments to have no further involvement in any Christian activities. However, they were told to expect further interrogation at any time. During their interrogation, intelligence officials questioned them on their political views and pressured them to vote in the upcoming election. The pressure to vote is to bolster voter turnout and attempt to portray Iran as a truly democratic nation.

Hamed Ashoori was given a 10-month prison sentence verbally on April 12 following his final court hearing on March 7. Intelligence officials charged him with "propaganda against the Islamic Republic". On February 23, 2019, Hamed was arrested for his church membership and had his home raided of Christian materials. At the time of the arrest, officials offered him a monthly salary for his cooperation to act as an informant on Christian activity. He refused, subsequently beaten, and later released a few days later on March 6. As a condition of his release, courts sent Hamed to "re-education" sessions with an Islamic cleric. Though after four sessions he refused to participate, and his case picked back up in March 2021. He is currently appealing the sentencing.