



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

Iran Manipulates Christian Converts With No Place to Worship

11/03/2021 Iran (International Christian Concern) - Three Iranian Christian converts submitted a joint letter questioning how and where they can worship when their long prison sentences are complete. Babak Hosseinzadeh, Behnam Akhlaghi, and Zaman Saheb Fadaie, were all arrested on charges of "acting against national security" for participation in a house church. However, Iran only recognizes churches for Christians of Armenian and Assyrian descent, leaving Persian converts without an option to worship.

The former two, Babak and Behnam, each released a video while on furlough, asking for their voices to be heard and for an answer. Babak says in his video, "After these five years, when I am released, will you put me back in prison again because I continue to believe in Christ? Will I be separated from my family again? Will I still be threatened with exile?" In their joint letter, the three converts say there is a "big gap between the written law and the practice of ignoring many Christians [namely Persian-speaking Christians] and their basic rights", such as "the right to have an official church building".

The Christian converts request prayer and assistance, in conjunction with Article18, by using the #place2worship hashtag to demand a place for those of Persian descent to worship.

Saheb, one of the three signatories on the letter, also was recently denied parole for the second time on October 24. However, neither time has he submitted a request for parole. Saheb has been imprisoned since July 2018, serving a reduced sentence of six years. In July of this year Saheb was presented with a form acknowledging that his conditional release request was denied, even though he never applied. The convert has maintained that he cannot accept the terms of the conditional release, namely no involvement with a house church, and therefore will not apply for parole.

Just days after the footage from inside Evin prison was leaked, Saheb, along with other Christian prisoners of conscience, met with a high profile prosecutor who told they met conditions for parole. Four suggested actions were written on Saheb's file: "reduction of sentence, suspension of sentence, release with electronic tag, or conditional release". Two days later, on September 3, Saheb was given 15 days' leave.

Yet his most recent denial for parole stems from this recommendation in early September. "The only conclusion one can draw from all of this is that the orders from the prosecutor - one of the highest officials within the judiciary - were nothing but a PR exercise following the scandalous videos of mistreatment of prisoners, and a form of damage control," Article18 comments.