



Voice of the
Martyrs

PERSECUTION
& PRAYER
ALERT

Persecution & Prayer Alert

Voice of the Martyrs Canada
www.vomcanada.com

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*"By surrendering our very
lives to Jesus, the objective of
oppression cannot succeed, even
though we suffer from it."
~ Floyd Brobbel
CEO for Voice of the Martyrs Canada*

TÜRKIYE: Arrested Iranian Convert Faces Deportation

Sources: Article18, Barnabas Aid, Mission Network News

When threatened with imprisonment for his faith in 2013, a Christian convert named Mojtaba Ahmadi was forced to flee from Iran. Upon his arrival in neighbouring Türkiye, he applied for refugee status. However, despite the fact that he stayed more than a decade within the country, Mojtaba had never been interviewed about his case and, therefore, did not receive official protection as a refugee.

On January 29th, Mojtaba was suddenly arrested by immigration authorities and accused of leaving Düzce, his present city of residence, without authorization. He denies ever having left Düzce. In addition to having his identification card confiscated, officials took him to the Ayvacık Geri Gönderme Merkezi detention centre. If deported, the arrested believer may have to spend at least three years in prison.

Before escaping to Türkiye, Mojtaba previously faced months of detention and torture in Iran for allegedly "spreading propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran." While the church in Iran is growing rapidly, believers like Mojtaba risk the possibility of imprisonment and torture. For more reports on the persecution of Christians in Iran, see www.vomcanada.com/iran.htm.

Over the years, officials in Türkiye have also become increasingly antagonistic towards Christian ministry workers. According to one source, individuals seeking asylum are regularly sent to deportation camps, seemingly arbitrarily. To review reports specifically addressing persecution in Türkiye, go to www.vomcanada.com/turkiye.htm.

- *Pray for God's swift intervention so that Mojtaba will be released from detention and not deported to Iran.*
- *In the meantime, may he officially gain refugee status and protection in Türkiye.*
- *Please prayerfully remember the many other believers in Iran who have been detained without cause, as well as those experiencing increasing pressures in Türkiye.*

EGYPT: Prisoners Released After Years of Detention

Sources: ADF International, USCIRF, International Christian Concern, Morning Star News, Amnesty International

Originally from Yemen, Abdulbaqi Saeed Abdo was forced to flee to Egypt in 2014 after being subjected to violent attacks because of his conversion to Christianity. Then, in 2021, Abdulbaqi was arrested by Egyptian officials following an interview he did for a Christian television program addressing the topic of persecution in Yemen. Additionally, he was identified as a member of a Facebook group for those who had converted from Islam to Christianity. Nour Gerges, an Egyptian Coptic believer who also participated in the same Facebook group, was arrested at the same time.

Both men were detained without charge for more than three years. According to Abdulbaqi's family members, he was in poor health during that time. Thankfully, both believers were released from detention on January 23rd. Abdulbaqi has since been reunited with his wife and five children in Canada. Details on the location and condition of Nour Girgis are not yet available.

Even though the two men were released, Egyptian authorities have not dropped the blasphemy charges against either of them. And while Abdulbaqi is no longer in the country, he is working to clear his name. To learn more about the persecution of Christians in Egypt, and/or to view recorded documentaries/podcast interviews, go to www.vomcanada.com/egypt.htm.

- *Praise God for the recent release of these two believers in Christ!*
- *Pray that all charges against them will be completely dropped.*
- *May they both experience full recoveries from the physical injuries they sustained – along with the mental anguish they experienced – during their terms of incarceration.*
- *Ask the Lord to provide wisdom, grace and guidance to all those in Egypt who are evangelizing and discipling others while surrounded by opposition.*

IRAN: Two Pardoned Pastors Rearrested

Sources: Article18, Christian Daily International, Iran Human Rights Monitor

While Nasser Navard Gol-Tapeh had been sentenced in 2017 to ten years' imprisonment because of his Christian ministry, he was suddenly pardoned and released in 2022. Similarly, Joseph Shahbazian, a house church leader who had likewise been sentenced to ten years in 2022, was

released after just over a year following an appeal of his sentence. More information on Nasser's case is available at www.vomcanada.com/ir-2022-10-27.htm.

For unknown reasons, both pastors were recently rearrested on February 6th without warning. Each of them was apprehended in their homes and then taken back to Tehran's Evin Prison. While the motives for their arrests are unknown, according to a report from *Article18*, any Christian who is considered to be "unaligned" with the goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran is at risk of arrest and imprisonment on "security" charges.

As Joseph is an Iranian-Armenian pastor, and Armenian churches are considered legal, his arrest demonstrates that no Christian is safe in the country – even those who allegedly have freedom to worship. More reports relating to the persecution of our Christian brothers and sisters in Iran are available at www.vomcanada.com/iran.htm.

- *Please pray for the health and safety of these two recently rearrested pastors.*
- *May the reassuring presence of the Holy Spirit greatly strengthen and encourage them, as well as the many other believers who are presently being incarcerated in Iranian prisons due to their faith.*
- *Also prayerfully uphold their loved ones during this difficult time of separation, asking that they too would receive needed strength and encouragement from the Lord as they await the hopeful soon reunion of their families.*

The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:
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