

Three Iranian Muslims converted to Christianity appealing against 80 lashes



Rasht: February 14, 2017. Iranian Christians request further prayer for three Christian converts in Rasht, who are appealing against a sentence of 80 lashes for drinking wine at communion, and two Christian converts in Evin Prison, Tehran, who are threatening to go on hunger strike.

Yaser Mosibzadeh, Saheb Fadayee and Mohammad Reza Omidi were arrested on 13th May 2016, along with their pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, as they were celebrating communion. They have all been charged with acting against national security and have had two hearings, but a verdict is still pending.

Yaser, Saheb and Mohammad Reza were also charged with consumption of alcohol for drinking wine at communion and sentenced on 10th September to receive 80 lashes each.

On 9th February the lawyer representing Yaser, Saheb and Mohammad Reza attended an appeal hearing on behalf of his clients and stressed the point that, as converts to Christianity, it is not illegal for them to drink wine because, although alcohol is prohibited for Muslims in Iran, it is permitted for Christians and other recognised minorities. The judge has said that he will deliver a verdict after 20 days and friends of the three men request prayer that the judge will overturn the sentence.

On 11th January MEC reported that the Revolutionary Guard had contacted these men and warned them against meeting together and sharing the Gospel with others. They were threatened with immediate arrest and further charges.

On Friday 26th August Amin Nader Afshar and Hadi Askary were arrested at a picnic in Firuzkuh along with Ramiel Bet Tamraz, Mohammad Dehnavy and Amir Sina Dashti. They were detained in Ward 4 of Evin Prison, Tehran. No charges have been brought against the men despite weeks of interrogation.

In October and November Ramiel, Mohammad and Amir were able to get conditional release by submitting substantial bail payments. Hadi and Amin have been unable to raise the amount of bail demanded for their release (approximately USD 31,000) and want a hearing as soon as possible. It is reported that Hadi has been suffering from a kidney infection and has not received any medical attention.

Last week Hadi and Amin announced that they would go on hunger strike to demand adequate medical care and an end to the delays in their case. After seven days without food, Amin fell very ill as his blood pressure dropped substantially. He was refused medical attention.

Source : Pakistan Christian