

## Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani Update

September 29, 2011

Greetings in the name of Jesus, Prince of Peace

Earlier this month we requested further intercession for an Iranian pastor, Yousef Nadarkhani who received a death sentence for apostasy (i.e. leaving Islam) in September 2010. Recall that he appealed to the Supreme Court which instructed the Revolutionary Tribunal of Gilan Province to review the case, specifically to verify whether Yousef was previously a practising Muslim. Yousef claims that, although raised in a Muslim home, he was never a Muslim by choice, conviction, belief or consistent practice, and that he should therefore not be regarded as an apostate.

The Tribunal hearing took place over four days, from 25th to 28th September. On each of the four days pastor Yousef was asked to recant his faith in Jesus, but he refused to do so. Although the court affirmed Yousef's claim not to have been a practising Muslim as an adult, the judge ruled that because he is of Muslim ancestry he remains guilty of apostasy as per the court's previous ruling.

Pastor Yousef's lawyer argued again that there is no basis in Iranian law for such a ruling. It is also contrary to Iran's commitments under international law. However, the ruling is consistent with the previous rulings of Iranian Shi'ite clerics, which have legal force in Iran. It is also consistent with amendments to Iran's penal code which were provisionally approved by Iran's Parliament in September 2008 but which have not yet formally been adopted.

The death sentence has therefore been upheld. A written verdict should be delivered within one week. However, the timing of the implementation of the sentence is unpredictable, and some fear that pastor Yousef could be executed before a written verdict is delivered.

Recall that Yousef is a pastor within the Full Gospel 'Church of Iran' denomination in the northern city of Rasht. He has been detained in prison since October 2009. Yousef and his wife, Fatemeh, have two young sons, aged 9 and 7. Fatemeh was detained for four months in 2010.

Iranian Christians thank us for our prayers. They request our continued intercession that:

- a. Yousef's life will be spared
- b. Yousef will remain firm in his faith and know the presence and peace of Jesus each day
- c. His wife, Fatemeh, and their two sons will know the comfort and hope of Jesus, and that the family will be reunited soon
- d. Christians throughout Iran will not be intimidated but will know the Lord's enabling and guidance
- e. All officials involved will love mercy, act justly, learn about Jesus and choose to follow Him

-----Website: [www.meconcern.org](http://www.meconcern.org)