

### Week 6: Pray for Farshid Fathi (Iran)

**Arrest and Background** Pastor Farshid Fathi (35) was arrested in December 2010. A former Muslim, he is a house church leader and was arrested with about 60 other Christians during a crackdown on house churches in Tehran and other cities.

Farshid was held illegally for 15 months in the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran. At his trial in a Revolutionary Court in 2012, Farshid's Christian activities were portrayed as political offences – he was charged with actions against national security through membership of a Christian organisation, collection of funds, contact with foreign organisations, and propaganda against the Islamic Regime by helping to spread Christianity. Farshid was also charged with having Bibles printed in Farsi, unlawfully distributing Bibles and possessing Christian literature. He was sentenced to six years in prison.



During Farshid's imprisonment, he has spent nearly a year in solitary confinement. Rev Sam Yeghnazar of Elam Ministries described him as "a man after God's own heart" and "a shining beacon for Christ in Evin prison", and the son of an Ayatollah remarked on how beloved Farshid was amongst the prisoners.



**Family** Farshid and his wife Leila have a daughter and son, Rosanna and Bardia. In 2013, facing extreme pressure from Iranian intelligence, his family fled to Canada.

**Recent news** In December 2014, Farshid was sentenced to an additional year in prison, meaning that he is not due for release until 2017. The additional sentence relates to an incident in April 2014 when prisoners in his section protested about terrible prison conditions. During the protest over 100 guards launched a brutal attack in which more than 30 prisoners were injured, including Farshid who was injured when going to another prisoner's aid. Human rights activists believe that his conviction and additional sentence is aimed at silencing those injured in the attack.

In March 2015, it emerged that Farshid may face an additional two years in prison after the imam of his ward said that Farshid did not comply with the religious leader and insulted him. Another Christian in the ward said that the imam attempted to confiscate Farshid's Bible, and after Farshid refused, the imam filed a lawsuit against him. It remains unclear whether Farshid will be allowed to keep his Bible in prison.

#### Prayer Points

1. Pray that Farshid will continue to experience God's presence in prison and that the extra one-year sentence will be overturned.
2. Pray also for God's blessing on Leila, Rosanna and Bardia.
3. Pray that Farshid will be allowed to keep his Bible in prison.