

Week 3: Pray for Maryam Zargaran (Iran)

Arrest and background Maryam Naghash Zargaran (37) is a house church member and former Muslim who was involved in Pastor Saeed Abedini's orphanage project. She is serving a four-year sentence in Tehran's Evin prison. Maryam, also known as Nasim, was first summoned to the intelligence office in February 2011 and interrogated over her involvement in house church activities. In January 2013 she was summoned back to the intelligence office, arrested and charged with "*propaganda against the Islamic regime*". Security agents raided her home in Tehran and took her Christian books, computer and other belongings.



In July 2013, a Revolutionary Court found Maryam guilty of waging an "*anti-security agenda to spread Christianity in Iran in order to pervert Iranian society from the way of truth*" and sentenced her to four years' imprisonment. She was accused of converting from Islam to Christianity; active membership of an Assemblies of God church; establishment of a house church to attract the youth to Christianity and contact with foreign Christian ministries for evangelism in Iran.



Family and health Maryam's parents are elderly, and she is unmarried. Her family was harassed when she was first summoned to the intelligence office in February 2011, and had to supply the title deeds of the family home to bail her in 2013. For months, Maryam was denied the right to visits from her brother and sister.

Maryam suffers from several medical conditions. She underwent heart surgery nine years ago and needs regular check-ups.

Maryam had a heart attack in prison in September 2013, for which she was treated in hospital. Since 2014, she has suffered from numbness in her limbs and joint pain and has been diagnosed with lumbar disc disease, arthritis and osteoporosis. The prison doctor prescribed five days' hospitalisation and immediate physiotherapy, but the Attorney General refused to grant permission for hospitalisation. During her imprisonment Maryam has also suffered from anemia, diabetes and high cholesterol, but has been denied treatment.

Latest news from prison Maryam was granted medical leave again in October 2015, but after a few days was ordered back to prison mid-treatment because Tehran's Attorney General refused to extend her leave permit. In June 2015, the Ministry of Intelligence announced that it had been unaware of her case being processed in the judicial system, and stated that it takes full responsibility for the case and will begin a review soon. In November 2014, Maryam was granted four days' leave, but on her return was strip-searched and sexually assaulted by female prison guards. Reports say this harassment has been mentally damaging.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would protect and encourage Maryam in prison.
2. Pray that Maryam would receive all the medical treatment she needs.
3. Pray that God would protect Maryam's family from harassment.