

Week 4: Pray for Youcef Nadarkhani (Iran)



Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani (44) leads the non-Trinitarian Church of Iran house-church network in the northern city of Rasht. The Church of Iran follows the teachings of William Branham, the American "Jesus Only" Pentecostal preacher of the 20th century and is known to seek followers among evangelical house churches.

Youcef was born into a Muslim family but became a Christian at the age of nineteen. In July 2018, Youcef began serving a ten-year sentence in Tehran's Evin prison for "*acting against national security including propagating house churches and promoting Zionist Christianity*". Following a retrial in May 2020, his sentence was reduced to six years in prison.

Youcef was detained in May 2016 when Ministry of Intelligence security agents raided a house church communion service he was attending with other converts in the home of his friend Yasser Mossayebzadeh. The agents arrested Youcef and Yasser (and briefly detained Youcef's wife Fatemeh Pasandideh, known as Tina) and confiscated Bibles, computers and mobile phones. They later arrested two other members of the church, Mohammadreza Omidi and deacon Saheb Fadaie.

The four Christians were released on bail but in June 2017 they were sentenced to ten years each in prison and, after their appeals failed, they were called to prison in July 2018. Ten police officers burst through Youcef's front door and assaulted him and his son Daniel with electric batons before taking Youcef to Evin prison. In the following three days his friends were also arrested and taken to Evin prison.

After serving his sentence, Youcef will have to serve an additional two years in internal exile in southeast Iran, 2000 km from home. Youcef previously spent three years in Rasht's Lakan prison under sentence of death for apostasy but was acquitted in 2012.

Family

Youcef and his wife Tina have two sons, Daniel (19) and Joel (16). Daniel is working in a local market to support the family but the authorities are threatening him with military conscription. Joel's school is closed because of Covid restrictions but the educational authorities have not registered him for online learning.

Latest News

Youcef is reported to be well and extremely grateful for the worldwide prayer for his release. He provides pastoral care for eleven members of his church who are also in Evin prison.

Prayer Diary

- Sunday** Ask God to keep Youcef safe and well in prison.
- Monday** Pray that Youcef would be released early.
- Tuesday** Ask God to bless and sustain Tina, Daniel and Joel.
- Wednesday** Ask that the boys would be able to access education.
- Thursday** Pray for the Church of Iran to follow the God of the Bible (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).
- Friday** Pray for protection and freedom for Iran's house churches.
- Saturday** Pray for the continuing spread of the Gospel in Iran.

