

Week 3: Pray for Farshid Fathi (Iran)

Arrest and background Farshid Fathi (34), a former Muslim, was arrested in December 2010 and held illegally for 15 months in the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran. Farshid's arrest was part of a coordinated crackdown during which 60 members of house churches in Tehran and other cities were arrested. His trial was postponed several times, but eventually he was tried by a Revolutionary Court in January and April 2012. At his trial, 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, being in 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. The authorities had Farshid's laptop during the interrogations, giving them access to church financial information, such as spending on mission activities and travel abroad to conferences. These activities were seen as evidence of acting against national security, and therefore crimes. He was sentenced to six years in prison.



Family Farshid is married to Leila and they have two young two children, daughter Rosanna and son Bardia. In April 2013, Leila, Rosanna and Bardia emigrated from Iran to Canada. In November 2013, Farshid wrote to Rosanna for her 10th birthday: *"My beautiful Rosanna... I will never forget the first moment I saw you ten years ago. You were crying and your little hands were shaking like all infants. But even your cry was beautiful for me. Although it is my honour to be in prison for our Lord Jesus Christ, I am so sorry that I couldn't be with you for your last three birthdays... I want you to know I love you so much and nothing could separate our hearts from each other."*

Latest news from prison During Farshid's imprisonment, he has spent nearly a year in solitary confinement. Rev Sam Yeghnazar of Elam Ministries has described Farshid as "a man after God's own heart" and said "Farshid has become a shining beacon for Christ in Evin prison, so much so that the son of an Iranian Ayatollah has commented on Farshid's sweet nature in a video available on YouTube, remarking on how beloved Farshid is amongst the inmates." At the end of 2013, Farshid wrote from prison: *"2013 is going to end and we are very thankful to the Lord for everything we were given this year. I had called 2013 'the year of revelation'. Now I am very excited because I am calling 2014 'the year of God's presence'."*

Prayer Points

1. Pray that Farshid will continue to be a shining beacon for Jesus in prison and pray that 2014 will truly be "The Year of the Lord's presence" for him.
2. Pray for Farshid's wife Leila and their daughter Rosanna and son Bardia as they live in Canada and feel the pain of separation from Farshid.
3. Pray for all those who come into contact with Farshid in prison, that they will be drawn to the Lord Jesus.