

SARA AHMADI (IRAN)



Sara Ahmadi (44) is a convert from Islam who began serving an eight-year sentence for house-church leadership in Tehran's Evin prison in August 2022. Her husband **Homayoun Zhavah** is serving a two-year sentence in a separate section of Evin prison.

Sara and Homayoun, who live in Tehran, were arrested by Ministry of Intelligence agents on suspicion of belonging to an "illegal organisation" in June 2019.

Homayoun was released after a month but Sara was detained for 67 days, including 33 days in solitary confinement.

In November 2020 Sara was sentenced to eleven years in prison and Homayoun to two years in prison. They were both charged with "action against national security" and Sara was charged with "running illegal groups". Her sentence was reduced to eight years on appeal in December 2020 and they remained out of prison waiting to be summoned. In August 2022 they answered a summons to Evin prison, expecting to collect confiscated property, but were imprisoned.

Family

Sara's husband Homayoun Zhavah is serving a two-year prison sentence (see week 2 of the Lent Prayer Project).

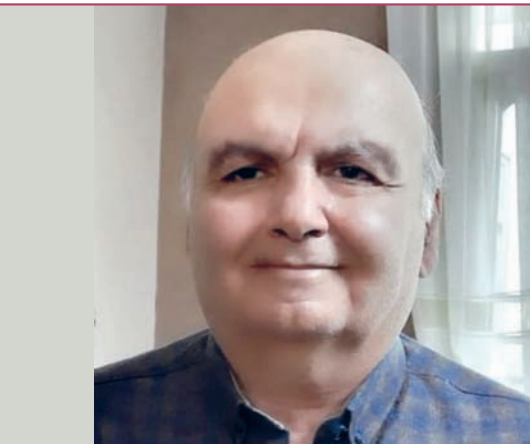
Latest News

On 22 January 2023, Sara was one of thirty prisoners in the women's ward of Evin prison to sign a statement demanding an end to executions of protesters and unjust prison sentences.

PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Ask God to protect and encourage Sara in prison.
- Monday:** Pray for Sara's mental and physical health.
- Tuesday:** Pray that she would be released early.
- Wednesday:** Ask God to comfort Sara in her concern for Homayoun.
- Thursday:** Pray for the house church in Sara's absence.
- Friday:** Pray for Sara's witness to other prisoners and guards.
- Saturday:** Pray for protection and freedom for house churches in Iran.

HOMAYOUN ZHAVEH (IRAN)



Homayoun Zhavah (64) is a convert from Islam who began serving a two-year sentence for house-church membership in Tehran's Evin prison in August 2022. His wife **Sara Ahmadi** is serving an eight-year sentence for house-church leadership. Homayoun has advanced Parkinson's disease and Sara was his primary carer before their imprisonment. Homayoun and Sara were arrested by Ministry of Intelligence agents on suspicion of belonging to an "illegal organisation" in

June 2019. Homayoun was released on bail after a month.

Their case was heard in November 2020 at the Revolutionary Court in Tehran and Homayoun was sentenced to two years in prison for "action against national security" through membership of "Zionist missionary Christianity" groups. Sara was sentenced to eleven years in prison, later reduced to eight years on appeal. They remained out of prison until August 2022, when they answered a summons to an office at Evin prison, expecting to receive back confiscated property, but instead were imprisoned. Homayoun was able to call relatives to ask them to collect the car in which he and Sara had arrived.

Family

Homayoun's wife Sara is serving an eight-year sentence in a different section of Evin prison.

Latest News

On 30 September 2022, Homayoun's 64th birthday, Article 18 reported that he had been denied medication in prison.

PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Ask God to protect and sustain Homayoun in prison.
- Monday:** Pray for him to receive the medical care he needs.
- Tuesday:** Pray that Homayoun would be released soon.
- Wednesday:** Pray that prisoners and guards would look after him.
- Thursday:** Ask God to encourage Homayoun in his faith.
- Friday:** Pray that his witness might bless other prisoners and guards.
- Saturday:** Ask God to comfort Homayoun as he misses Sara.



Rev Gebremedhin Gebregiorsis is an Eritrean Orthodox priest who was arrested in November 2004 because of his involvement in a Bible study renewal movement that attracted thousands of young Eritreans. He has remained in prison, incommunicado, ever since. He had led programmes working with HIV patients and campaigning for the prevention of AIDS and was one of the organisers of the *Medhane Alem* ("Saviour of the World")

renewal movement, along with Rev Dr Futsum Gebrenegus and Rev Dr Tekleab Menghisteab (who featured in the 2021 Lent Prayer Project). The three Christians were arrested in November 2004 and imprisoned in the maximum-security Wengel Mermera interrogation centre in the capital, Asmara.

Patriarch Antonios of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, who died in February 2022 under house arrest, protested about the arrest of the three priests and accused the government of interfering in church affairs. The Eritrean Orthodox Church is one of only three permitted churches in Eritrea, the others being Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches – all other churches were banned in 2002.

Family

Rev Gebremedhin is a widower with three adult children.

Latest News

Rev Gebremedhin's wife Tsgeweyni Mekonnen Haile died in June 2022.

PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Pray for Rev Gebremedhin's release.
- Monday:** Ask God to encourage him and give him hope.
- Tuesday:** Pray for protection, good health and adequate nutrition.
- Wednesday:** Pray for Rev Gebremedhin's faith and witness in prison.
- Thursday:** Ask God to bless his fellow-Christians in Wengel Mermera.
- Friday:** Pray for Rev Gebremedhin's three adult children.
- Saturday:** Pray for protection and freedom for all Christians in Eritrea.

ASIF PERVAIZ (PAKISTAN)



Asif Pervaiz (39) is a Christian from Lahore in northeast Pakistan who was accused of sending blasphemous text messages in October 2013 and has been in prison ever since. In September 2020 he was sentenced to death.

Asif worked at a factory where his supervisor, a Muslim named Saeed Ahmed Khokar, put him under constant pressure to convert to Islam. In October 2013 Khokar

accused Asif of sending blasphemous texts to his phone, but Asif said he had lost his SIM card and that Khokar used it to send the texts to himself. Asif was arrested and charged with blasphemy, waiting almost seven years in Lahore District Jail for his case to come to trial.

In September 2020 Asif was sentenced to three years in prison for phone misuse followed by hanging. His lawyer Saiful Malook filed an appeal, saying there was no evidence to justify the charges. Asif was moved to Faisalabad Jail, over 120 km from Lahore. His wife Marilyn makes a ten-hour round trip to visit once a month.

Family

Asif and Marilyn have three sons and a daughter (14, 12 and twins aged 9) who are bullied at school because their father is in prison.

Latest News

Asif's appeal is still pending. While he waits, he is being held alone in a death cell and feels lonely and depressed.

PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Pray for peace and hope for Asif as he waits for a hearing.
- Monday:** Ask that he be acquitted and released soon.
- Tuesday:** Ask God to protect Asif and give him good health.
- Wednesday:** Pray for practical and emotional support for Marilyn.
- Thursday:** Ask God to bless and protect the four children at school.
- Friday:** Pray for wisdom and security for lawyer Saiful Malook.
- Saturday:** Ask God to encourage Asif and Marilyn in their faith.

HAO ZHIWEI (CHINA)



Pastor Hao Zhiwei (52) of Egangqiao Church in Ezhou city, Hubei province was detained in July 2019 and charged with fraud for collecting offerings and tithes from church members – the authorities claimed that collecting money amounted to fraud because of her illegal status as an unlicensed preacher in an unregistered church. In February 2022 she was sentenced to eight years in prison and in December she lost her appeal.

Pastor Hao ministered in the government-approved Three-Self Church until her pastor's licence was revoked in 2007 because she disagreed with the Religion Bureau's governance of churches. Her congregation became an unregistered house church. In 2016 Egangqiao Church was banned and in 2019 Pastor Hao was detained and the church building was demolished. She has suffered severe ill health in prison, including several bouts of acute pancreatitis.

Family

Pastor Hao's husband Zhang Youwu died of liver cancer in 2018. Their sons Paul (19) and Moses (15) are struggling without parents and Moses is suffering from severe depression.

Latest News

Pastor Hao's health is poor and she is under "special treatment", with some prisoners in the same room tasked with monitoring her and reporting back to guards. Her sons continue to struggle and care from church members is limited because they face threats.

PRAYER POINTS

- Sunday:** Pray for better treatment for Pastor Hao in prison.
- Monday:** Ask that God would heal and encourage her.
- Tuesday:** Pray that Pastor Hao would be released early.
- Wednesday:** Pray for peace and hope for Paul and Moses.
- Thursday:** Pray that Moses would recover from depression.
- Friday:** Ask God to sustain the church in Pastor Hao's absence.
- Saturday:** Pray for freedom for all China's house churches.