

## Week 1: Pray for Sara Ahmadi (Iran)



Sara Ahmadi (44) is a Christian convert from Islam who began serving an eight-year sentence for house-church leadership in Tehran's Evin prison in August 2022. Sara's husband Hodayoun Zhavah (64, who has advanced Parkinson's disease) is serving a two-year sentence for house-church membership in a separate section of Evin prison. Sara and Hodayoun, who live in Tehran, were arrested by Ministry of Intelligence agents on suspicion of belonging to an "illegal organisation" in June 2019 while they were on holiday with several other Christian families in the northern city of Amol, near the Caspian Sea.

The other Christians were also questioned but only Sara and Hodayoun were detained (first in Sari, near Amol, and then in Evin prison). Hodayoun was released after a month but Sara was held for 67 days, including 33 days in solitary confinement, during which she was subjected to extreme psychological torture. They were both charged with "action against national security" through membership of "Zionist missionary Christianity" groups and Sara was charged with "running illegal groups".

Their case was heard in November 2020 at the Revolutionary Court in Tehran and Judge Iman Afshari sentenced Sara to eleven years in prison (three years for house-church membership and eight years for leading the group). He sentenced Hodayoun to two years in prison for membership of the group and also banned them both from foreign travel or membership of any social or political group for two years after their release and gave them each six months' community service.

When their appeal was heard in December 2020, Sara's sentence was reduced to eight years (removing her three-year sentence) but all other aspects of their sentences were upheld. They remained out of prison while they waited to be summoned, but their bank accounts were frozen in 2021. In August 2022, Sara and Hodayoun answered a summons to an administrative office of Evin prison, expecting to receive back confiscated property, but instead were imprisoned.

### Family

Sara's husband Hodayoun Zhavah is serving a two-year prison sentence and will feature in week 2 of the Lent Prayer Project.

### Latest News

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

## Prayer Diary

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

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