

## Week 1: Pray for Mehdi Akbari (Iran)



Mehdi Akbari (also known as Yasser) is a Christian convert from Islam and is a member of a house church. On 28 January 2019 intelligence agents arrested him at his home in Tehran's Ariashahr district and took him to Evin Prison, where he was put in solitary confinement and interrogated for thirty days. He was released on bail in March 2019.

Mehdi was charged with "acting against national security by forming an illegal evangelical Christian group" and was tried in June 2020 at the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. Judge Mohammad Moghiseh, nicknamed the "Judge of Death" for his harsh treatment of prisoners of conscience, reportedly said, "Your actions are worthy of death!" In October 2020 he sentenced Mehdi to ten years in prison and had him transferred to Evin Prison.

Mehdi later wrote that he could not understand how membership of a house church could be viewed as an "action against national security". He said, "I don't know what to say if someone asked me how I acted against national security. I only know that I am, and will remain, a Christian, and that I will preach about the light of God and kingdom of heaven to everyone."

Mehdi appealed to the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court but both confirmed the verdict against him.

In December 2021 Mehdi was informed that his 18-year-old son Amir-Ali, who had cerebral palsy, had died in the care facility where he had been living since his father's imprisonment in 2020. His death was reportedly due to complications after surgery. The bureaucracy involved in obtaining leave from prison, including a heavy bail demand, meant that Mehdi missed the funeral of his only child. Too late, he was granted ten days' leave.

Mehdi had been allowed to visit his son two months before he died and later wrote, "When Amir-Ali saw me in handcuffs and prison clothes, he was reassured that I had not abandoned him... I had to go back to my cell, but I consider the best moment of my life to be the last time I hugged my Amir-Ali."

### Family

Mehdi was a single parent to his only child Amir-Ali, who had cerebral palsy and died aged 18 in a care facility in 2021.

### Latest News

In July 2023, in a letter smuggled out of prison, Mehdi wrote about his grief following his son's death, saying it was "like a suppressed cry and an unexpressed sorrow".

## Prayer Diary

<b>Sunday</b>	Pray that Mehdi would be released early.
<b>Monday</b>	Ask for protection and good health for Mehdi in prison.
<b>Tuesday</b>	Ask God to comfort Mehdi as he remembers his son.
<b>Wednesday</b>	Pray for hope and encouragement for Mehdi.
<b>Thursday</b>	Pray for fellowship with other Christian prisoners.
<b>Friday</b>	Thank God for Mehdi's faith and pray for his witness.
<b>Saturday</b>	Pray for freedom for Iranian Christian converts to meet.



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