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## YOUCEF NADARKHANI HAS BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR HIS FAITH

Youcef Nadarkhani is a 34-year-old pastor from Rasht, Iran, who has been sentenced to death for apostasy (turning away from Islam).

Youcef was arrested in October 2009 after he protested a government policy that required children, including his 8- and 9-year-old sons, to study the Koran in school. Youcef told school officials that Iran's constitution allows for freedom of religious practice. He was arrested by the secret police and charged with apostasy and evangelism to Muslims. He was tried in September 2010 and sentenced to death on 13 November 2010 for apostasy.

Youcef has been held in prison where the authorities have used various methods, including medication, to convert Youcef back to Islam. But he has refused to deny his faith in Christ.

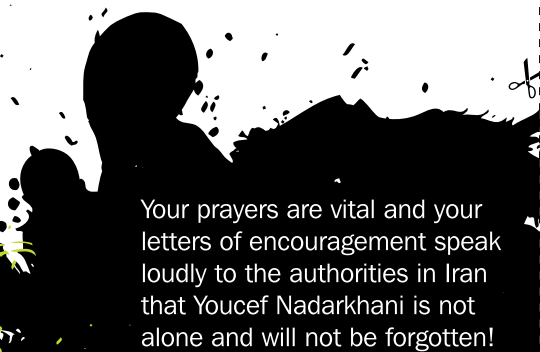
Because of his firm stand, the authorities also arrested his wife, Fatemah, who was put on trial without an attorney and sentenced to life in prison. She was later released after an attorney appealed her sentence.

On 3 July 2011, following an international prayer campaign, Iran's Supreme Court overturned Youcef's death sentence, under the condition that he recants his Christian faith.

"The Supreme Court has annulled the death sentence and sent the case back to the court in Rasht, asking the accused to repent," Youcef's lawyer said.

It is not clear what will happen if he does not recant.

Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani remains in prison awaiting re-examination of his case. Voice of the Martyrs contacts report that he is standing firm and strong in his faith. He is even encouraging other prisoners, exhorting them to trust in the Lord.



Your prayers are vital and your letters of encouragement speak loudly to the authorities in Iran that Youcef Nadarkhani is not alone and will not be forgotten!