



2019

# ANNUAL REPORT

VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN **IRAN**



OpenDoors



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A Joint Report - January 2020

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During 2019, Iranian Christians, along with other religious minorities, continued to suffer multiple violations of their right to freedom of religion or belief. They were subjected to hate speech by government representatives, while ongoing surveillance by the authorities was often accompanied by harassment and the threat of criminal charges.



Christians were arrested, interrogated, pressured to recant or to commit to refrain from meeting other Christians or engaging in Christian activities. Many received prison sentences or saw their sentences upheld by appeals courts. Most of the reported violations involved converts from Islam, but there were also instances where members of the recognised Armenian and Assyrian Christian minority communities faced jail terms due to their religious activities. In several cases, the children of Christian converts were denied school certification to proceed with state education. Recognised church buildings remained closed to Persian-speaking Christians<sup>1</sup> and the state made moves to confiscate church property. There were also several reports of relatives in Iran being harassed and threatened on account of Christian family members who had left the country.

## INTRODUCTION FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

### UNDER NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Iran is a diverse country, home to a rich variety of religious and ethnic groups with a historical presence in the area. However, since the 1979 revolution the Iranian government has been attempting to impose a homogeneous Iranian identity with an Islamic Shi'a belief system, resulting in the repression of minority faith groups, whose culture, traditions and religious beliefs are considered a threat to the Islamic Republic and its values.

The first Article of the Iranian Constitution institutes a theocracy, with Article 12 establishing Islam and the Twelver Ja'fari school of Shi'a Islam as the nation's official religion. Accordingly, all Iranian laws must be derived from and be consistent with Islamic law.

Article 13 of the Constitution states that *"Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are considered the only recognised religious minorities. They may exercise their religious ceremonies within the limits of the law. They are free to exercise matters of personal status and religious education and follow their own rituals"*. The Iranian government interprets these three recognised minorities to refer only to those from ethnic communities such as Assyrian and Armenian Christians, who are considered part of the historical heritage of the nation. However, these minorities are generally not allowed to hold services or possess religious materials in Persian.



Conservative estimates put the total number of Christians in Iran at between 500,000—800,000.<sup>2</sup> Ethnic Assyrian and Armenian Christians comprise approximately 250,000 of these, the remainder being converts from Islam, and the overall majority belong to the Protestant house-church movement. With only four remaining Persian-speaking churches across the country, most converts gather in informal house-church meetings for prayer, worship and Bible study. The total number remains unclear, due to governmental pressure, the ongoing migration of converts to other countries and the fact many converts are isolated and not connected to a house-church or other Christians.

Aside from Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, all other religious minorities remain unrecognised by law and are afforded no rights under the Iranian Constitution.

## ARTICLE 18

Iran ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1975. Article 18 states:

**1** *Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.*

**2** *No-one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.*

**3** *Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.*

**4** *The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.*



However, Iran fails to uphold the right to freedom of religion or belief for all its citizens as enshrined in the ICCPR. Iran ranks as the ninth hardest country to be a Christian on Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List,<sup>3</sup> while the US Commission on International Religious Freedom lists Iran among its 'Countries of Particular Concern' for "egregious" violations of religious freedom.<sup>4</sup>

This report records the violations experienced by the Christian community during 2019.<sup>5</sup>



# ONGOING VIOLATIONS

## OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

Despite the claims of politicians and pro-government media that Christians in Iran enjoy freedom of religion<sup>6</sup> and that nobody is imprisoned for his or her beliefs,<sup>7</sup> independent observers affirm that the Islamic Republic continues to oppress the Christian community and target Christian converts in particular.

Religious and political leaders in Iran continue to speak out against Christianity<sup>8</sup> and assert that Christian converts, as apostates from Islam, should be put to death<sup>9</sup>. Iranian intelligence services have collaborated with clerics to oppose conversions to Christianity.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that the Christian community experiences repression in various forms. Iran's main intelligence service, the Ministry of Intelligence of the Islamic Republic of Iran (MOIS), closely monitors Christian activity and, together with the Revolutionary Guard (IRGC), raided several Christian gatherings in private homes during 2019, arresting those in attendance and confiscating personal property, such as Bibles, mobile phones and computers. Those arrested were subjected to intensive and often abusive interrogation<sup>11</sup> and generally faced charges amounting to "actions against national security".<sup>12</sup> Prison sentences received by Christians in 2019 ranged from four months to five years.

Christians continued to face challenges in obtaining Bibles and Christian literature during 2019. Bibles and related literature were consistently confiscated in searches by Iranian security agents, and it was reported that a bookseller, Mostafa Rahimi, was arrested in Bukan in June and sentenced to three months plus one day in prison for selling Bibles.<sup>13</sup>

In an unprecedented move by Iranian security forces, there were several reports in 2019 of the family members of Iranian Christians living abroad being harassed, even though they might not be Christians themselves. Vahid Roufegarbashi, a Christian convert who fled Iran and is now a refugee in the US, reported that Iranian intelligence agents paid several visits to both his and his wife's families in Iran, with the agenda of putting pressure on them and damaging their reputation in the community.<sup>14</sup>



In 2019 some children of Christian converts who refused to attend Islamic classes were denied the necessary certification to proceed with their education, violating Article 18.4 of the ICCPR, which upholds “*the liberty of parents ... to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions*”.<sup>15</sup> In September pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who is serving a 10-year prison sentence in Evin Prison, Tehran, for “acting against national security” through his Christian ministry, announced that he was going on hunger strike to draw attention to the lack of educational prospects for his two teenage sons, Danial, 17, and Youeil, 15.<sup>16</sup> He ended his hunger strike after three weeks, having received assurances that the matter would be investigated.<sup>17</sup>

Christian convert Fatemeh (Mary) Mohammadi was suspended from university with no explanation given.<sup>18</sup> In December she tweeted that she had been denied the right to continue with her university education at Azad University, Tehran.<sup>19</sup>

## HOUSE-CHURCH NETWORKS

### AND THE TARGETING OF CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY

For nearly a decade, access to official church buildings has been restricted to the recognised Armenian and Assyrian Christian minorities.<sup>20</sup> Persian-speaking Christians have consequently been forced to resort to informal meetings, frequently called “house-churches”, which are regularly targeted by the security services. As well as violating freedom of religion or belief, this restriction, and the targeting of house-churches, constitutes a violation of the right to peaceful assembly and association.<sup>21</sup>

Not only did the aforementioned prohibition continue in 2019; there were also regular reports of house-churches being raided. There had been a surge in raids over the 2018 Christmas period, as arrests were reported in the cities of Ahvaz, Chalus, Damavand, Hamedan, Hashtgerd, Karaj, Mashhad, Rasht, Shahinshahr and Tehran. In one week alone, 114 Christian converts were reported to have been arrested.<sup>22</sup>



In 2019 there were many reports of Christians, mainly converts, being arrested. Those arrested often faced pressure to recant their faith or sign commitments not to meet with other Christians. Those who did not comply were detained and generally faced charges related to evangelism, engaging in “illegal” house-churches or acting against “national security”. All were eventually released conditionally on payment of bail, pending a court summons.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of the pervasive and ongoing repression during 2019, Christian converts and Christians from ethnic minorities continued to flee the country.

## ARRESTS AND SENTENCING OF CHRISTIANS IN 2019

*The following cases have all been reported in the public domain. However, it should be noted that there are many more cases that go unreported, either because no-one raises awareness – arresting authorities frequently issue threats to prevent publicity – or because those involved have requested confidentiality.*



In **January** Christian convert **Sina Moloudian** was violently arrested at his home in Isfahan and taken to Dastgerd Prison. He was told that he faced charges of “propaganda against the state through the promotion of the Christian faith and the distribution of Bibles”. He was released in February after posting bail of 100 million tomans (US\$7,500) and is still awaiting a summons to court.<sup>24</sup>



Also in **January** Christian converts **Simin Soheili** and **Yaser Akbari** were summoned to Evin Prison for questioning, then arrested and detained. Simin was released after two weeks and informed that she faced charges of “disturbing public order”, “propagating Christianity” and “connecting with foreign entities”. The prosecutor threatened her with a 10-year prison sentence.<sup>25</sup>



Another arrest in **January** was that of 64-year-old Christian convert **Ismaeil Maghrebinejad** in Shiraz. He was harshly interrogated with no regard to his age and released six days later after posting bail of 10 million tomans (US\$900). He was charged with “propaganda against the state” and “insulting the sacred Iranian establishment”. On 22 October at a court hearing, the judge questioned him about apostasy and increased the bail to 100 million tomans (US\$9,000).<sup>26</sup>



Also in **January** Christian convert **Majidreza Souzanchi Kushani**, who in May 2018 was sentenced to five years in prison for “membership of an evangelical group and conducting evangelism,” had his sentence reduced to two years’ imprisonment on appeal. He is being held in Evin Prison.<sup>27</sup>

In **January** and **February**, nine Christian converts were arrested in Rasht: **Abdolreza (Matthias) Haghnejad**, **Khalil Dehghanpour**, **Hossein (Elisha) Kadivar**, **Kamal Naamanian**, **Mohammad Vafadar**, **Mohammad (Shahrooz) Eslamdoust**, **Babak Hosseinzadeh**, **Mehdi Khatibi** and **Behnam Akhlaghi**. In July, at a preliminary hearing, the nine converts were accused of “acting against national security” and “promoting Zionism”. Judge Mohammed Moghiseh rejected the lawyer representing Abdolreza Haghnejad, Shahrooz Eslamdous, Babak Hosseinzadeh, Mehdi Khatibi and Behnam Akhlaghi, ordered them to be detained in Evin Prison and increased the bail demand for their conditional release to 1.5 billion tomans (US\$180,000) each – an exaggerated amount.<sup>28</sup> In October all nine men were sentenced to five years in prison on charges of “acting against national security”<sup>29</sup> and Abdolreza Haghnejad, Shahrooz Eslamdous, Babak Hosseinzadeh, Mehdi Khatibi and Behnam Akhlaghi remained detained in Evin Prison, while the other four men were conditionally released pending an appeal.





In **March** the appeal court in Bushehr upheld the guilty verdicts of 16 Christian converts charged with “propaganda activities against the regime through the formation of house-churches”. The court sentenced 12 defendants to one year in prison, and four defendants to five months in prison.<sup>30</sup>



In **July** eight Christian converts were arrested in Bushehr after intelligence agents raided the homes of **Sam Khosravi** and his wife **Maryam Falahi**; **Sasan Khosravi** and his wife **Marjan Falahi**; **Pooriya Peyma** and his wife **Fatemeh Talebi**; **Khatoon Fatholahzadeh** (mother of Sam and Sasan Khosravi); and **Habib Heydari**. Khatoon was released on the day of her arrest, due to her age. The others were released on bail of 300 million tomans (US\$25,000) each after over two weeks’ detention.<sup>31</sup> They are expected to be summoned to court to face charges of “actions against national security”, “gathering and collusion against the state”, and “membership of an illegal organisation” (house-church).



Also in **July**, **Rokhsareh (Mahrokh) Ghanbari**, who had been arrested in December 2018, was summoned to Karaj Islamic Revolutionary Court to answer charges of “acting against national security”. She was sentenced to one year in prison.<sup>32</sup>



Again in **July**, Christian convert and activist **Fatemeh (Mary) Mohammadi**, who had already spent six months in prison for her membership of a Tehran house-church following her arrest in November 2017, was arrested for “improper hijab”, having initially gone to the police to complain about an assault.<sup>33</sup> She appeared in court in October and was acquitted, as was the lady who had assaulted her.

In **September Asghar Salehi, Mohammadreza Rezaei** and one other Christian convert from Fars Province were each sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "propaganda against the system through promoting Zionist Christianity". They had been arrested at their homes in September 2018 and interrogated harshly.<sup>34</sup> Following an unsuccessful appeal hearing, on 12 December 2019 Asghar Salehi was arrested while at work, and all three Christians are presently detained in Eghlid Prison.<sup>35</sup>

In **November** an appeal hearing was scheduled for **Rev. Victor Bet Tamraz**, his wife **Shamiram Issavi Khabizeh** (both ethnic Assyrians), and Christian converts **Kavian Fallah Mohammadi, Hadi Asgari** and **Amin Afshar Naderi**, but was postponed as the court was deemed "too crowded".<sup>36</sup> Rev. Victor Bet Tamraz, Kavian Fallah Mohammadi and Amin Afshar Naderi were arrested at a private Christmas celebration on 26 December 2014. Amin Afshar Naderi was re-arrested at a picnic in August 2016, together with Hadi Asgari and Ramiel Bet Tamraz, the son of Rev. Victor Bet Tamraz and Shamiram Issavi Khabizeh. In June 2017, Judge Mashallah Ahmadzadeh sentenced Rev. Victor Bet Tamraz, Kavian Fallah Mohammadi and Hadi Asgari to 10 years' imprisonment each for "conducting evangelism and illegal house-church activities". Amin Afshar Naderi was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for "conducting evangelism, illegal house-church activities and insulting Islamic sanctities". On 6 January 2018, Shamiram Issavi Khabizeh was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for "membership of a group with the purpose of disrupting national security" and another five years in prison for "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security".<sup>37</sup>



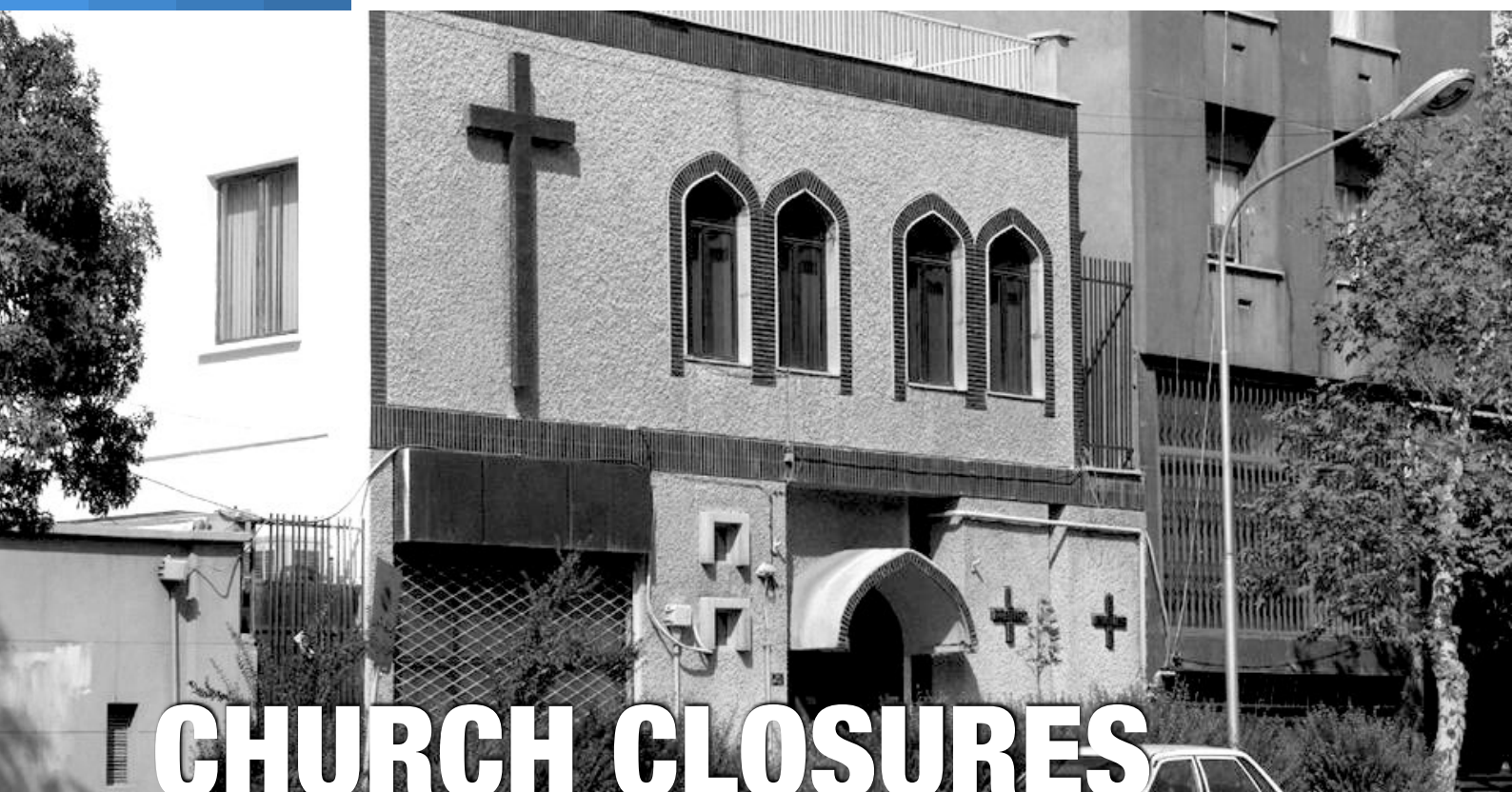




In **December** local Iranian news station Aran Moghan reported that a Christian had been arrested in Pars Abad and charged with promoting Christianity and "disturbing public opinion in the public and virtual spheres".<sup>38</sup> No further details were given about the individual.



Also in **December** it was reported that two other Christian men were arrested and charged with acting against national security.<sup>39</sup> Further details about the men have not yet been made public.



## CHURCH CLOSURES

### AND VIOLATION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

Churches which used to hold services for Persian-speaking Christians remained closed during 2019. These included **St. Peter's Presbyterian Church**, **Emmanuel Presbyterian Church** and **Assemblies of God Central Church** in Tehran; and Assemblies of God churches in Janat-Abad, Ahvaz, and Shahinshahr, among others. In addition, the Assemblies of God retreat centre in Karaj, the Garden of Sharon, remained closed following a confiscation order on 7 March 2018.<sup>40</sup>





On **9 May 2019**, agents from MOIS and EIKO (an organisation under the direct control of the Supreme Leader) raided the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Tabriz, a National Heritage site. They changed the locks, removed the cross from the church tower, installed monitoring equipment and ordered the church warden to leave.<sup>41</sup> Following an outcry, both nationally and internationally, the cross was restored to the building on 9 July.<sup>42</sup> Pro-government media in Iran later claimed the church had never been closed, and that its cross fell down and was replaced after being repaired.<sup>43</sup>

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Church buildings have been demolished and Christian cemeteries have also been desecrated in recent years.<sup>44</sup> On **22 February**, Manoto TV, an international Persian-language station, reported the desecration of a Christian cemetery in Kerman,<sup>45</sup> and in November the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported that the Evangelical Church in Hamedan was being used as a hospital warehouse, and that a car park for Hamedan University of Medical Sciences had been built over the graveyard of the church.<sup>46</sup>

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Then on **3 December**, the 29th anniversary of the execution for "apostasy" of Christian convert and pastor Hussein Soodmand, his family visited his grave on the edge of the Beheshte-Reza cemetery in Mashhad, only to discover it had been demolished.<sup>47</sup>

## IMPRISONED CHRISTIANS

According to public sources 17 Iranian Christians were held in detention at the end of 2019 on charges related to their faith, having either started sentences in 2019 or continued to serve sentences issued in previous years. It should be noted that the actual number of these detainees is higher; however, many cases have either not been made public or have gone unreported. A handful of Christians returned home after completing jail sentences in 2019. An unknown number of Iranian Christians are in the process of appealing prison sentences.



### SEVADA AGHASAR

On 21 July 2019 Iranian-Armenian Christian Sevada Aghasar was granted “conditional release” from Evin Prison after serving half of his five-year sentence for “acting against national security through house-church activities”.<sup>48</sup> He will not have to return to prison providing he upholds the conditions of his release, which includes a prohibition to conduct evangelism.



### FATEMEH (AYLAR) BAKHTARI

On 31 August, Fatemeh (Aylar) Bakhtari began serving a one-year jail sentence at Evin Prison. Fatemeh was one of a number of people arrested during a raid on her home in May 2017. She was sentenced in September 2018, alongside fellow convert Zaman (Saheb) Fadaie, who is currently serving 10 years in prison on other charges related to his faith. At their appeal hearing in January 2019, the two converts were asked to renounce their faith.<sup>49</sup>



### **MILAD GOODARZI, YAGHOOB NATEGHI, AMIN KHAKI SHAHEBEDIN SHAHI & ALIREZA NOURMOHAMMADI**

On 8 October, four Christian converts - Milad Goodarzi, Yaghoob Nateghi, Shahebedin Shahi and Alireza Nourmohammadi - left the central detention centre in Karaj and returned home after completing their four-month sentences. A fifth member of the group, Amin Khaki, remains in prison. During sentencing in March, Amin was given a longer sentence of 14 months because of a prior conviction, which was also related to his religious activities. All five had been charged with “propaganda against the state”.<sup>50</sup>



### **ROKHSAREH (MAHROKH) GHANBARI**

On 14 October, Rokhsareh (Mahrokh) Ghanbari, 61, began serving a one-year jail sentence in Shahid Kachooei Prison in Karaj for “propaganda against the system”.<sup>51</sup> She was one of five female converts arrested just before Christmas 2018 during a raid on her home. In January 2019 Rokhsareh was forced to visit an Islamic cleric to receive religious “instruction” and to be offered the chance to revert to Islam. She was sentenced to a year in prison in July.<sup>52</sup>



### **EBRAHIM FIROUZI**

On 26 October Ebrahim Firouzi, 33, was released from Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj, after serving two concurrent prison sentences. In 2013 he was sentenced to one-year’s imprisonment plus two-years in internal exile for various Christian activities and “acting against national security”, and in 2015 he was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment for “gathering and collusion” and “acting against national security”. On 12 November Ebrahim arrived in the distant city of Sarbaz to start serving the two years of internal exile handed down during the 2013 conviction.<sup>53</sup>



### **ZAMAN (SAHEB) FADAEI**

Some Christians in prison have been denied adequate healthcare. In December it was reported that Zaman (Saheb) Fadaei, serving a 10-year prison sentence in Evin Prison on charges related to Christian activity, had been suffering from fever, and that after initially being given medication, was denied further treatment despite the continuation of symptoms.<sup>54</sup>

## TABLE OF PRISONERS

*The following table only includes cases which have appeared in public reports, and does not constitute a comprehensive record of every Christian currently detained in Iran:*

Name	Place	Detention began	Released	Length of prison sentence
<b>Ebrahim Firouzi</b>	Karaj	2013	Oct. 2019	5 years
<b>Sevada Aghasar</b>	Tehran	2017	July 2019	5 years
<b>Naser Navard Goltapeh</b>	Tehran	Jan 2018	-	10 years
<b>Majidreza Souzanchi Kushani</b>	Tehran	2017	-	5 years (reduced to 2)
<b>Yousef Nadarkhani</b>	Tehran	July 2018	-	10 years
<b>Mohammad Ali (Yaser) Mosayebzadeh</b>	Tehran	July 2018	-	10 years
<b>Zaman (Saheb) Fadaie</b>	Tehran	July 2018	-	10 years
<b>Mohammad Reza Omid</b>	Tehran	July 2018	-	10 years
<b>Amin Khaki</b>	Karaj	July 2019	-	14 months
<b>Milad Goodarzi</b>	Karaj	July 2019	Oct. 2019	4 months
<b>Yaghoob Nateghi</b>	Karaj	July 2019	Oct. 2019	4 months
<b>Shahebedin Shahi</b>	Karaj	July 2019	Oct. 2019	4 months
<b>Alireza Nourmohammadi</b>	Karaj	July 2019	Oct. 2019	4 months
<b>Fatemeh Bakhtari</b>	Tehran	Aug. 2019	-	1 year
<b>Rokhsareh Ghanbari</b>	Karaj	Oct. 2019	-	1 year
<b>Abdolreza (Matthias) Haghnejad</b>	Tehran	Oct. 2019	-	5 years (under appeal)
<b>Mohammad (Shahrooz) Eslamdoust</b>	Tehran	Oct. 2019	-	5 years (under appeal)
<b>Babak Hosseinzadeh</b>	Tehran	Oct. 2019	-	5 years (under appeal)
<b>Mehdi Khatibi</b>	Tehran	Oct. 2019	-	5 years (under appeal)
<b>Behnam Akhlaghi</b>	Tehran	Oct. 2019	-	5 years (under appeal)
<b>Asghar Salehi</b>	Eghlid	Dec. 2019	-	6 months
<b>Mohammadreza Rezaie</b>	Eghlid	Dec. 2019	-	6 months
<b>A.T.</b>	Eghlid	Dec. 2019	-	6 months



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has an obligation under national and international law to respect, protect and fulfil the right to freedom of religion or belief. We therefore call:

- For the immediate and unconditional release of Christians detained on spurious charges related to their faith or religious activities.
- For the government of Iran to uphold the right to freedom of religion or belief for every citizen, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic background, including converts from other religions, thereby amending Article 13 of the Constitution to recognise fully the freedom of religion or belief for people of all faiths, as envisaged in Article 18 of the ICCPR, to which Iran is party, without reservation, and therefore legally bound to respect.
- For the government of Iran to:
  - Return confiscated churches, properties, and material belongings confiscated from Christians and other religious minorities.
  - Cease to use provisions such as Articles 220, 498, 499 and 500 of the Penal Code and Article 167 of the Iranian Constitution to unjustly detain minority-faith adherents.
  - Guarantee the right to counsel to all individuals charged with national security-related crimes, as well as the right to be represented by a lawyer of their choice, thereby repealing the Note to Article 48 of Iran's Criminal Procedures Regulations.
- We urge members of the international community to assist in holding Iran accountable for upholding its obligation to ensure and facilitate freedom of religion or belief for all of its citizens by highlighting this issue during political and/or economic discussions with, or concerning, Iran.
- We ask the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, to investigate the ongoing mistreatment of Christians and other religious minorities in Iran.
- Finally, we thank the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, Javād Rehmān, for raising the issues faced there by Christians – and Christian converts in particular<sup>55</sup> – and we ask for Iran to grant him access to the country to allow him to thoroughly investigate Iran's compliance with international human rights legislation to which it is party.

## END NOTES

**1** In this report the term “Persian-speaking Christians” is used to denote either converts, or Christians descended from converts, as opposed to members of the recognised Armenian and Assyrian minorities in Iran.

**2** “Country Policy and Information Note - Iran: Christians and Christian converts,” [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805075/Iran\\_-\\_Christians-Converts\\_-\\_CPIN\\_-\\_v5.0.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805075/Iran_-_Christians-Converts_-_CPIN_-_v5.0.pdf). Accessed 14 January 2020.

**3** “Iran is 9th hardest place to be a Christian – report,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/5327/>. Accessed 16 January 2020.

**4** “Iranian government heightened its systematic targeting of religious minorities in 2018 – USCIRF,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/3531/>. Accessed 16 January 2020.

**5** The details contained in this report are from public cases for 2019. Confidential cases have been omitted for security reasons and details on further incidents may still be forthcoming.

**6** Translation: “All are aware of the emptiness of so-called Christians who have sold themselves,” <https://tinyurl.com/yxxpac9l>. Accessed 29 October 2019.

**7** “Zarif: Iran does not jail people for their opinion,” [https://www.radiofarda.com/a/f14\\_zarif\\_iran\\_does-not\\_jailed\\_people\\_for\\_their\\_opinion/26987585.html](https://www.radiofarda.com/a/f14_zarif_iran_does-not_jailed_people_for_their_opinion/26987585.html). Accessed 29 October 2019.

**8** “The head of the Islamic propaganda department of Qom Seminary in a meeting with Naser Makarem Shirazi said that fighting “evangelical Christianity” is part of our core issues,” <http://mohabatnews.com/fa/?p=28208>. Accessed 12 November 2018.

**9** “Explaining the religion of Islam in society prevents evangelical Christianity from being promoted,” <http://shabestan.ir/detail/News/790046>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**10** “Intelligence minister's narrative of religious conversion in parts of the country,” <https://fa.shafaqna.com/news/743778/>. Accessed 16 October 2019.

**11** “Iran: Arrests of Five Female Christian Converts,” <https://meconcern.org/2019/01/31/iran-arrests-of-five-female-christian-converts/>. Accessed 11 October 2019.

**12** “World Watch Monitor – Iran,” <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/iran/>. Accessed 11 October 2019.

**13** “Kurdish Bookseller Sentenced to Prison for Selling Bible,” <https://hengaw.net/en/news/kurdish-bookseller-sentenced-to-prison-for-selling-bible>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**14** “Iranian Christian refugees’ families targeted by intelligence agency,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/4393/>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**15** “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>. Accessed 4 November 2019.

**16** “Yousef Nadarkhani goes on hunger strike as son barred from school,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/4734/>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**17** “Yousef Nadarkhani ends hunger strike after 21 days,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/4809/>. Accessed 29 October 2019.

**18** “فاطمه محمدی، نوکیش مسیحی از ادامه تحصیل در دانشگاه محروم شد” (Christian convert Fatima Mohammadi was banned from university), <https://www.hra-news.org/2019/hranews/a-23078/>. Accessed 1 January 2020.

**19** <https://twitter.com/marymohammadii/status/1208381200391380992>. Accessed 1 January 2020.

**20** “Farsi-Speaking Iranian Christians Banned From Attending Church,” <https://www.christianpost.com/news/farsi-speaking-iranian-christians-banned-from-attending-church-111986/>. Accessed 19 November 2018.

**21** Articles 21 and 22, ICCPR

**22** “Over 100 Iranian Christians Arrested by Intelligence Officials,” <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4132>. Accessed 1 January 2019.

**23** The weakening Iranian currency means it is sometimes difficult to give accurate figures for bail demands from Iranian Christians, but typically the demands are between \$30,000 and \$120,000, and often house title deeds have to be submitted as collateral.

**24** “Convert charged with ‘propaganda against state’ for promoting Christianity,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/2929/>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**25** “Iran: Christian convert released from prison,” <https://www.meconcern.org/2019/02/18/iran-christian-convert-released-from-evin-prison/>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**26** “Convert, 64, charged with ‘insulting sacred Iranian establishment’,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/2713/>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**27** “Christian convert’s jail sentence reduced on appeal,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/2473/>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

**28** “Iran: Update on recent court hearings for Iranian converts,” <https://www.meconcern.org/2019/07/29/iran-update-on-recent-court-hearings-for-iranian-converts/>. Accessed 2 January 2020.

**29** “Iran: Nine converts from Rasht get five years each,” <http://meconcern.org/2019/10/18/iran-nine-converts-from-rasht-get-five-years-each/>. Accessed 28 October 2019.

**30** “16 Bushehr converts face prison as appeals fail,” <https://articleeighteen.com/news/3514/>. Accessed 15 October 2019.

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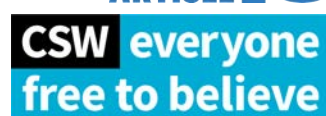
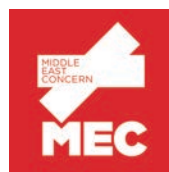
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