

Teen Convert Rifqa Bary Facing 'Serious' Health Battle

✖ The teen convert to Christianity who ran away from her Muslim parents claiming they threatened to kill her is facing a new battle.

Rifqa Bary, 17, has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of uterine cancer, according to her friend, Jamal Jivanjee, a Florida-based minister who talked with the teen Monday.

He said Bary has had two surgeries and is scheduled to undergo a third procedure Thursday. In an e-mail sent Monday morning, Jivanjee called on her supporters to fast and pray for the teen, saying her situation is "very serious."

Bary is expected to undergo several rounds of chemotherapy after healing from Thursday's surgery, Jivanjee said. He added that doctors won't know what stage the cancer is in until after the procedure.

"Rifqa is in desperate need of an army of supporters to know about what is occurring regarding her situation, and to pray for her healing," wrote Jivanjee, who also converted to Christianity from Islam and befriended Bary when he and his family lived in Columbus, Ohio. "I am a strong believer in the power of prayer because I am convinced that God sovereignly works out

His victories, and accomplishes justice through the prayers of people.”

Bary ran away from Ohio to Florida last summer, saying her parents threatened to kill her after learning she had converted to Christianity. Her parents have denied the allegations, and a Florida law enforcement investigation did not support her claims.

The teen has been in foster care in Ohio since October and is still embroiled in a court case over whether she will be returned to her parents, who immigrated to the U.S. from Sri Lanka. Bary and her family attend counseling sessions separately, but reconciliation seems unlikely in the near future.

Bary turns 18 on Aug. 10, but court documents show she is in the country illegally, and Jivanjee worries that she could be deported when she becomes a legal adult. It is feared that if Bary is returned to Sri Lanka she will be harmed or killed by Muslim extremists. Jivanjee hopes Bary will be granted asylum if her immigration status is not resolved before her birthday.

Bary’s attorneys last month sought an order that would allow her to apply for special immigration status, but a juvenile court judge declined to issue the order without first holding a hearing. An attorney for Bary’s parents said the couple has filed an immigration application for the whole family, the Associated Press reported.

Jivanjee said Bary believes God has a plan for her and that she will be healed. "But she felt like she needed people to be aware and praying for her," he told *Charisma*.