

Afghan Christian Given One Week to Renounce Christ

In many ways, 2011 is starting off just like 2010 ended.

Indeed, Christian persecution promises to remain a running theme this year as Charisma magazine receives one of the first reports out of Afghanistan that a judge has given an covert from Islam to Christianity one week to renounce his faith in Christ. If he does not reject Jesus before men, he will be sentenced with 20 years of imprisonment at best—and death at worst.

International Christian Concern (ICC) is watching the case and expects Shoaib Assadullah to hear the verdict in his case today. Assadullah was arrested on October 21 in Mazar-e-Sharif for giving a Bible to a man who later reported him to local authorities. He remains in a prison in northern Afghanistan's Mazar-e-Sharif.

"If Assadullah is executed, his death will signify the failure of the United States and her allies to liberate Afghanistan from the radical ideals of the Taliban after investing millions of dollars to reform the country's judicial system," argues Aidan Clay, ICC Regional Manager for the Middle East. "We urge the international community to demand the immediate release of Assadullah and to hold Afghanistan accountable to its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Pamir Productions spoke to Assadullah on December 31. At that time, he said he was quite certain that court officials would give him the death penalty. At his last court appearance, the judge gave him one final week to renounce his faith otherwise he would be hanged or killed. Shoaib stated he has given his life completely into the hands of Jesus.

Afghanistan is a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). According to article 18, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."