

Afghan Christian Released from Prison

Prayer works—and so do international diplomatic efforts. Charisma News has reported about the ongoing saga around Afghan Christian Said Musa. Now, the persecuted ex-Muslim has been freed at last.

Musa was arrested in May and it appeared as if he would be executed for converting from Islam to Christianity. But International Christian Concern (ICC) says it has learned that Musa was released from prison last week.

Even while Musa's family celebrates and thanks God, however, Shoaib Assadullah, an Afghan Christian who was arrested for giving a Bible to a man who later reported him to authorities, remains behind bars.

ICC shared the contents of a letter dated Feb. 13 in which Musa offered details of a visit by U.S. and Italian Embassy representatives offering him asylum. After the foreigners left the room, a trio of Afghan officials promised him a release within 24 hours if he wrote a statement outlining his regret for following Jesus Christ.

"I laughed and replied, 'I can't deny my Savior's name,'" Musa wrote. "Because my life is just service to Jesus Christ and my death is going to heaven [where] Jesus Christ is. I am a hundred percent ready to die. They pushed me much and much. I refused their demands."

ICC says it received a call from official from the U.S. Embassy in Kabul confirming that Musa was released and safely out of the country.

"I'm so thankful to the Lord that he is free and know it was a concerted effort on the part of so many people," says an ICC

representative in Kabul. "The Lord has allowed us to take part in this momentous event and I praise Him that it has ended with the freedom of Said Musa. Through Said's letters, he spoke publicly to the world a powerful testimony of his faith and perseverance."

Still, Assadullah is facing the same charges for apostasy from which Musa was finally released. In a letter dated February 17, and smuggled out of Qasre Shahi prison in Mazar-e-Sharif, Assadullah expressed fears that his execution is imminent.

"The court's decision is most definitely going to be the death penalty for me, because the prosecutor has accused me under the Clause 139 of the criminal code which says, 'If the crime is not cited in the criminal code, then the case has to be referred to Islamic Sharia law,'" he wrote.

"We still have a long road ahead before we witness religious freedom in Afghanistan," says Aidan Clay, ICC Regional Manager for the Middle East. "We must remain vigilant and keep the public and diplomatic pressure alive by continuing to shout with one voice for Shoaib Assadullah until together, we can also celebrate his release."