

Christians in Iran Face Danger, Imprisonment This Christmas for Believing in Jesus Christ

This Christmas season, millions of Christians worldwide will celebrate the birth of a baby boy in a stable—a momentous occasion that has eternal impact still today.

But for the hundreds of millions of persecuted Christians around the globe, says Save the Persecuted Christians (STPC), Christmas could be a time of fear and hiding, of danger and violence—all for worshipping Jesus Christ.

Such is the case in Iran, for example, where Christians are imprisoned simply for their Christian beliefs.

“Violence against Christians is becoming increasingly worse in Iran, which has regularly been in the top 10 of Open Doors’ World Watch List for Christian persecution,” said Dede Laugesen, executive director for Save the Persecuted Christians. “In Iran, the Christian faith cannot be shared, converting from Islam is a punishable offense, Christians gathering to worship is a risk, and believers cannot even conduct church services in their own language. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Iran this Christmas—and all year—that they may be able to freely, safely and peacefully worship the Savior rather than living in fear.”

Headlines detailing Christian persecution in Iran are becoming more commonplace, Laugesen noted.

Iranian Christians’ Appeal Hearing Postponed Yet Again Because “Too Many Cases”: Pastor Victor Bet-Tamraz, his wife Shamiram and their son Ramiel had their appeal hearings

postponed yet again on Nov. 13 on the grounds that the judge said there were too many cases and not enough time to hear the Christians' case; they have been waiting over two years for their appeals to be heard. [Read more.](#)

Imprisoned Iranian Pastor's Kids Denied School Certificates For Refusing to Study Islam: Imprisoned Iranian pastor Yousef Nadarkhani has gone on a hunger strike to protest the regime's attempt to bar his children from completing their education because they refuse to study Islam and read the Quran. [Read more.](#)

9 Christians Facing 5-year Prison Sentences in Iran for Attending Church: Nine Christians in Iran have been convicted of attending church services at someone's home. Open Doors USA reports police have raided a church in the country, where it is illegal to convert to another religion from Islam. It is also illegal to participate in a home church. [Read more.](#)

Prayers Requested for Iranian Christian Imprisoned for Not Renouncing Her Faith: An Iranian woman who converted to Christianity has begun serving a prison sentence after refusing to give up her faith and is calling on the Christian community to pray. Fatemeh Bakhteri was initially handed a one-year sentence in September 2018 for "propaganda against the regime" together with a two-year ban on social activities involving more than two people. [Read more.](#)

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) also reported earlier this month that the State Department has intensified its efforts to free missing and presumed imprisoned U.S. citizen Robert Levinson, who disappeared in Iran in 2007. Following parallel initiatives by the White House, State Department and FBI, the Iranian government confirmed for the first time it has an open court case against Levinson and considers him a missing person. [Read more.](#)

Save the Persecuted Christians, which advocates on behalf of hundreds of millions of Christians facing heavy persecution worldwide, has a mission to save lives and save souls by disseminating actionable information about the magnitude of the persecution taking place globally and by mobilizing concerned Americans for the purpose of disincentivizing further attacks on those who follow Jesus.

For believers around the world, Save the Persecuted Christians seeks to bring awareness about targeted Christians through the “The People of the Cross” exhibit, which features images, facts and quotes about the persecution of Christians in multiple countries.

The banner highlighting Iran reports that Christianity is routinely criminalized, with Iranian Christians sentenced to 10 years in prison for “acting against national security.”

“Many of the 200+ Christians arrested since 2016 for ‘illegally assembling for worship’ or converting to Christianity were convicted as ‘state enemies,’” the banner states. “Possession of a Bible or meeting Christian missionaries can lead to charges of conspiracy with foreign agents. Christian prisoners endure severe mistreatment, including beatings and solitary confinement.”

Additional banners in “The People of the Cross” exhibit feature countries such as Turkey, where just .02% are Christian due to brutal persecution—down from 20% in 1902, as well as North Korea, Nigeria, India and China. A majority of the countries highlighted in the banners are high on Open Doors’ 2019 World Watch List.

This exhibit has been joined by another, “Warfare on Women,” released during the 2019 U.S. Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, which reveals the specific terror-tactic used to demean and degrade female believers to instill fear into the heart of Christian communities. To learn more about hosting a

traveling exhibit contact Save the Persecuted Christians or visit the website, where panels are available to view online.

According to Aid to the Church in Need's biannual report on Religious Freedom in the World, at least 327 million Christians experience persecution—a number roughly equal to the current U.S. population. According to Open Doors USA World Watch List, 245 million Christians are victims of high to extreme levels of persecution (such as torture, rape, sex-slavery, expulsion, murder and genocide), an increase of 14% over 2018. Open Doors also estimates 1 in 9 of the world's Christians experience persecution and that every month: 345 Christians are killed, often in public and without regard to gender or age; 219 Christians are abducted and imprisoned indefinitely without trial; and 106 churches are demolished.

Save the Persecuted Christians has developed a dedicated news aggregator—to capture current instances of persecution and to provide readers with an easy way to share these heartbreaking stories with others. Stories are categorized and resource reports are easily accessible.

With so much of the world's Christian population being attacked, imprisoned and/or exiled for their beliefs, such as Christians in Iran, the need has never been greater for the sort of grassroots campaign STPC's SaveUs Movement is working to foster. Its efforts are modeled after a miraculously successful one that helped free another population suffering from heavy persecution—Soviet Jews—by penalizing those in the Kremlin responsible for such repression. Through this movement, Save the Persecuted Christians endeavors to provide American policymakers with the popular support they need to effect real change worldwide and alleviate systemically the suffering being experienced by so many of those following Christ. {eo}