

AG Church Raided by Iranian Intelligence Agency

The Iranian Intelligence Agency raided an Assemblies of God church in Ahvaz on the morning of Dec. 23, according to multiple news agencies.

Pastor Farhad Sabokrouh, his wife, Shahnaz Jizani, and the entire congregation—children included—were arrested, loaded on buses and taken to an undisclosed location for interrogation.

Mohabat News says that after several hours of interrogation, the detainees were released, with the exception of pastor Farhad Sabokrouh, his wife and two other members—Naser Zamen-Dezfuli and Davoud Alijani. Currently, the location, treatment and condition of the four remain unknown.

“We have spoken to our area directors and leaders in the region and have confirmed that this action did indeed take place,” states AG General Superintendent George O. Wood. “Although direct communication into Iran is very difficult and some of the details of the arrest remain unclear, what is clear is that our brothers and sisters in Iran need our prayers for supernatural endurance, wisdom and protection.”

According to the Christian Today Australia, this is not the first time that Christmas celebrations in Iranian churches have been raided in this way. Similar raids and detentions during the Christmas season have occurred in Iran for the last three years.

Ironically, the Iranian Student’s News Agency posted that on Dec. 21, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani sent a message to Pope Benedict XVI, which, in part, stated that Jesus Christ’s teachings should be heeded more.

Reports explain the Assembly of God church in Ahvaz was

holding its Christmas service on Friday because Sundays are work days in Muslim countries and Christmas (which was on a Sunday) is not a recognized national holiday, while Friday is a weekend day.

“Prayer for the persecuted church is vital,” states Wood. “Whether one prays for God to intervene supernaturally to place protection around the church, to give the church supernatural ability to withstand persecution or some combination of the two, our prayers in support of our brothers and sisters experiencing intense persecution throughout the world is desperately needed.”