

AG Responds to Iran Church Closures

Iranian security forces closed down the Jannat Abad Church, an Assemblies of God (AG) church in Tehran, in June, leaving the 100-member church without a home. Now, church officials stateside are responding.

Reports state that Iran's Revolutionary Guard's Intelligence branch gave the order to close the building on Tuesday, June 5. Currently, only three Farsi-speaking churches remain in Tehran—including the Assemblies of God Central Church of Tehran, which is reportedly also being pressured, a Presbyterian and an Evangelical church.

"Believers in Iran and many other parts of the world literally place their livelihoods, their lives and their families' lives on the line every time they enter their church's doors," says Greg Mundis, executive director of AG World Missions. "We need to faithfully intercede for our brothers and sisters who are suffering so greatly for the name and cause of Christ."

The forced closing of this AG church follows the forced closing of another AG church in December 2011 in Ahvaz, Iran, where the entire congregation was arrested and interrogated.

Several months ago, George Wood, AG general superintendent, met with President Obama concerning his administration speaking forcefully to Iranian leaders about religious rights, mentioning Yousef Nadarkhani, a Christian pastor who Iranian courts sentenced to death on charges of apostasy (abandoning Islam). It is believed at least 20 other Christians are being held behind bars due to their faith in Christ.

Wood echoes Mundis' thoughts and concerns, stating that prayer is absolutely essential for the persecuted church, adding: "We also need to continue to make our political leaders aware of

the situation of the persecution of Christians world-wide and request local media begin covering the tragic story of the deprivation of human rights in respect to religious freedom that is occurring all over the world.”