

Are You Willing to Take a Stand for the Persecuted Church?

Daily, Iranian Christians face **persecution** and even death for their faith in Jesus Christ. It is illegal in Iran for Christians to **worship** or own a Bible in their native tongue.

For almost three years, **Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani** has been imprisoned in Iran. His crime: refusing to renounce his Christian faith. And while its daily Twitter campaign advocating for the pastor's freedom currently reaches more than 2.9 million, the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) is expanding its advocacy for those Christians facing or suffering from **religious persecution** in Iran through the two-day event called 48 Hours For Religious Freedom.

The ACLJ is calling on "all persons of goodwill interested in defending the freedoms of religion and conscience" to join together during the weekend of Sept. 22-23, 2012 on behalf of Nadarkhani and other Iranian Christians suffering from **religious persecution**.

Churches, organizations, and individuals are encouraged to mark the weekend according to their own faith tradition. This could include:

- Holding a candlelight vigil.
- Engaging in a period of **prayer**.
- Reading a letter from a diocesan official at Mass.
- Writing letters of encouragement to Nadarkhani.
- Organizing a peaceful protest.

- Creating a program to educate people about the dangers and prevalence of religious discrimination.
- Writing respectful letters on Nadarkhani's behalf to Iranian embassies and to the Supreme Leader of Iran.

Nadarkhani's plight is far too common around the world today. It is estimated that more than 159,900 Christians are martyred each year for their faith. The purpose of 48 Hours For Religious Freedom is to raise international awareness of **religious discrimination** and persecution.

"We must stand against discrimination and **persecution** wherever they occur," says Tiffany Barrans, international legal director with the ACLJ and coordinator of 48 Hours For Religious Freedom. "It is our hope that this will be just the first step in standing for **freedom of religion** and conscience and against religious discrimination and persecution around the globe."

To assist those who want to participate, will house multilingual resources including an informational video, a prayer sheet, a sample church bulletin, suggested activities and other resources. Churches, organizations and individuals can request additional information by emailing 4RelFreedom@.