

Could Iran's Change in Power Ease Christian Persecution?

Let a different election—and potential victory for Christians—consume your mind for a moment.

Reformist victories in Iran give Christians a quiet hope anti-Christian violence and brutality could see a decrease.

“Ninety prisoners are in jail for their faith, including Behnam Irani. This pastor has been beaten, abused and threatened with death. As have others,” Release International CEO Paul Robinson told *Premier*.

“With Iran now voting for reform, now is the time to end the crackdown on the church and set free prisoners who are behind bars for their religious beliefs.”

Open Doors USA currently lists the Iraqi persecution level as “extreme,” with Islamic extremists frequently targeting Christians.

“The regime of the clerics has tightened its strong controlling power by reducing the speed of Internet and by putting more pressure on all Iranian citizens, including Christians,” according to an Open Doors prayer action.

“The regimes have more checkpoints and security officials are more suspicious. Out of Iran's total population of 80.3 million, it is estimated that only 450,000 Christians live here. Expanding the influence of Shia Islam in the Middle East is still a priority for Iran's current leaders,” the post continues.

It appears those prayers may have created headway in the Iraqi government, though.

“(The election results) do give momentum to a turn away from

the most confrontational politics of the last president – Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – amid an electorate eager for Iran to emerge from decades of isolation,” Thomas Erdbrink writes for the *New York Times*.

“While the hard-liners still remain firmly in control of the judiciary, the security forces and much of the economy, the success of the moderate, pragmatic and pro-government forces seemed to give Mr. Rouhani political currency to push a course of greater liberalization of the economy at home and accommodation abroad,” Erdbrink writes.