

Imprisoned Iranian Pastor in Critical Condition

Behnam Irani, a 41-year-old Iranian **pastor** serving prison time, is facing severe health concerns in the wake of physical **persecution**.

While serving his time in Karaj's Ghezel Hesar Prison, Behnam has suffered several beatings from prison authorities and his cell mates. Authorities have ordered these beatings to occur regularly.

Voice of the Martyrs, Canada (VCM) reports that Behnam lost consciousness in the last few days due to colon complications and severe bleeding from ulcers. He was admitted into a military hospital.

Behnam has since regained consciousness, but his health is reportedly declining because of harsh mistreatment and prison conditions. He is unable to walk or see well, and VCM says there are growing concerns that he may not even survive these next few months.

Serving a five-year sentence, Behnam has a little less than four years left to serve in prison. For the first few months of his sentence, he was held in solitary confinement.

His conviction occurred in January 2011 for crimes against national security. At the time of Behnam's arrest, he was conducting a **Bible study** for 10 young Iranian men who had recently come to Christ.

Behnam is a husband and father to two children. His family is concerned about his poor health, especially since his brother died from intestinal cancer.

Ghezel Hesar Prison, where Behnam is held, is one of Iran's

largest and most notorious prisons for violence and cramped conditions. The head of Prisons Organization says it houses 20,000 inmates: 300 times its holding capacity.

Please **pray** for the Lord to fully restore Behnam's health. Pray for Christ's perfect comfort to give his family peace. Pray that prisoners and guards in Ghezal Hesar Prison will come to know Christ through Behnam's example and faith.