

Iran Pastor Rejects 'Recant for Freedom' Deal

Iranian officials are continuing to pressure detained **pastor Youcef Nadarkhani** to deny his Christian faith "and accept the prophet Muhammad as his savior."

The American Center for Law and Justice, which is working closely with Nadarkhani's case, confirmed Tuesday that the pastor was recently asked again to **recant his faith**.

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Nadarkhani was given the option to be freed from prison if he accepted Muhammad as "a messenger sent by God."

"Local authorities indicated they would release the pastor if he agreed to make the statement regarding the prophet Mohammed. However, pastor Nadarkhani has refused to do so, and remains in prison awaiting a final decision on his case," the group said in a statement dated Jan. 13.

These demands have been put on Nadarkhani at least three times before by Iranian officials.

When asked to renounce his faith at his latest trial last September, Nadarkhani responded, "I cannot," and has continued to refuse.

"Rather than uphold its legal obligations under the rule of law, which requires it free pastor Youcef and allow him to peacefully practice Christianity, Iran yet again obliterates any credibility it might have held with the international community," ACLJ International Legal Director Tiffany Barrans said.

The Iranian court that heard Nadarkhani's case promised a decision on the pastor's release more than a month ago.

So far, a ruling has yet to be made.