

Pastor and Wife Suffer Brutal Prison Terms for Refusing to Deny Christ

Once again, the regime in Iran is showing the world what it means to suffer for Christ.

In a chilling wave of persecution, the Islamic Republic has re-arrested Iranian-Armenian Pastor Joseph Shahbazian, imprisoned his wife Lida Alexani, and upheld harsh sentences for Christian converts—one of them a pregnant woman.

This is not justice. This is oppression, plain and simple.

As reported by The Christian Post, Lida Alexani was “arrested on April 12 and sent to solitary confinement in Evin Prison in Tehran,” with no known charges. Her husband, Pastor Shahbazian, was already behind bars for “propaganda against the regime,” running a house church, and receiving tithes—accusations meant to criminalize Christian worship.

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“Joseph’s mother, Jhasmen... passed away on April 9... in the absence of both her son and daughter-in-law,” according to advocacy group Article 18.

But the persecution doesn’t end with the Shahbazians.

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Three Christian converts—Narges Nasri, Abbas Soori, and Mehran Shamloui—had their sentences totaling over 40 years upheld by an appeals court. Nasri, pregnant and already burdened with government intimidation, was handed the harshest sentence: 16 years and a \$3,500 fine.

Her crime? Attending a house church and posting Christian support on social media.

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The regime is sending a clear message that practicing Christianity is considered treason. Even basic acts like giving tithes and owning a Bible are treated as threats.

“Making financial donations, charitable offerings, or paying tithes to support church activities are standard practices for Christians worldwide, but such activities have been criminalized by Iran’s Revolutionary Courts,” Article 18 stated.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we cannot ignore the pain of our persecuted family. The Bible reminds us in 2 Timothy 3:12, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” Let us respond not with outrage or empty words, but with steadfast prayer, for courage and God’s deliverance for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.

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