

Pastor Sits in Iraqi Prison One Year Without Trial

While the media spotlight has shined brightly on **Pastor Youcef Nadharkhani** in Iran, another man of God has been sitting in prison for more than a year in Iraq.

Pastor Jamal Shabaq was falsely accused, arrested, never formally charged, and has yet to have a trial—or even find out when one might get underway, according to Jason Law, a spokesperson for World Compassion Terry Law Ministries.

Shabaq was arrested in July 2011 by police in Duhok, a city in the northern Kurdish region of Iraq. One year later there still have not been any official charges filed against him. Local authorities are quick to say Shabaq's arrest is not because he is a Christian, yet the reasons for holding him have changed multiple times over the course of a year.

This leaves some to believe, including Shabaq's family and those close to him, that his arrest has something to do with his efforts to share the **gospel** message with people in northern Iraq. They believe someone was threatened or offended his **evangelism**.

"This is a man who we worked closely with and helped empower to reach hurting people with the love of Christ. We have worked side by side helping provide shoes to children in need as well as food for poor families who were struggling to make ends meet," says Law.

"Someone with influence within the government didn't like what Jamal was doing and has created some problems for him. These are the real challenges Christians face in other countries around the world."

Shabaq reportedly suffered from headaches and vision problems

and was reported to have a swollen eye and a partially paralyzed face since his arrest.

Despite the difficulties and stresses this puts on Shabaq and his family, he continues to do in prison what he did when he wasn't behind bars—tell people about Jesus. Since he was imprisoned, Law says 40 inmates have confessed Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Below is a personal letter World Compassion recently received from Shabaq's 18-year-old daughter giving an account of what happened and their gratitude for all those who have been praying and supporting them during this difficult time.

A Letter from Karin – Pastor Jamal's Daughter

July 6th was the day when I got a call from my mom. Her voice was like someone who is trying to hide their tears even after telling me, "Do not come home and do not worry. Everyone is fine but they took your father, sweetie."

I cried after that, but at the same time my heart was proud of my father because that morning we saw those men following us everywhere. I told him, "Dad stop the car and tell them to leave you alone." I remember his face, laughing at me and saying, "This is God's will and he will save me when He wants. This is what happened to Jesus and His disciples." He was very happy and he did not stop praying and singing and praising the Lord.

We did not hear any news about my dad for more than 20 days. Every morning I would feel more sadness and more loneliness and I hate when I feel hopeless. I hate seeing my mom cry. I was tired of missing my father. I got in trouble because my dad wasn't there to help me or save me. He wasn't there to tell me not to cry. My mom helped me but that wasn't enough; I needed my dad's hug.

The worst happened when we found out my dad wasn't in good

health. He cried and was hopeless and weak because of what they did with him. My dad had a very strong personality; he was always happy. But this time his heart was really broken. But his faith was stronger. We could see the **Holy Spirit** in his eyes.

We are still waiting and still praying even though we know we might lose this war, but we are happy because when we lose, some other people will be saved and they will hear about God's glory. We do not care about this pain and weakness or our tears. We do not care about their lies, their mean sayings, or their cursing because the Savior will come. But the only thing we need is your **prayer**.

Please pray for my dad's health and pray that God will encourage him and be with him. Thanks for every person who cares about my dad and my family. Thanks for praying. We love you all and do not give up from this. Be God's sun and a part of everything he owns.

Thank you,

Karin Shabaq