

Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani's Attorney Sentenced to Jail

Pastor **Youcef Nadarkhani** has been in jail for years for refusing to deny Christ in a Muslim nation. Now, his attorney is also behind bars.

Mohammed Ali Dadkhah, a well-known human rights attorney in Iran, was sentenced to nine years in jail and is reportedly banned from practicing law or teaching at universities for 10 years.

"I have been convicted of acting against the national security, spreading propaganda against the regime and keeping banned books at home," Dadkhah told *The Guardian*.

"I went to the Revolutionary Court on Saturday morning [April 28] to defend one of my clients, Arjang Davoodi. The branch Judge told me that I was not allowed to defend my client. He said, 'You yourself will have to go to prison.' He said, 'Your sentence has been finalized by the appeals court,' and he told me to expect service of the ruling.

"According to this ruling, I have been sentenced to nine years in prison, 10 years' ban on legal practice, 10 years' ban on teaching, cash fines and flogging. It appears that the flogging sentence will be converted to a cash fine," Dadkhah told the International Campaign for Human Rights.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), which has been working to secure Nadarkhani's release, called Iran's decision to imprison Dadkhah "very troubling." The ACLJ also sees it as a move that puts the Christian pastor in greater danger.

"The news that this renowned human rights attorney has been sentenced to prison by Iranian officials is very troubling," said Jordan Sekulow, executive director of the ACLJ. "This

development only reinforces the fact that Iran has no regard for basic human rights. It also raises further concern about the fate of Pastor Youcef. With his attorney facing nine years in prison, and no other lawyer likely to take the case, Pastor Youcef has no legal advocate, which places him at greater risk.”

This news comes as international pressure intensifies calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Youcef, who faces a death sentence for embracing Christianity. The ACLJ has confirmed that Youcef, who has now been imprisoned for 935 days, is still alive.

The ACLJ launched a global Twitter campaign on behalf of Youcef and announced that the Tweet for Youcef campaign now reaches more than 2 million Twitter accounts worldwide. Youcef’s story has reached every continent and subcontinent, including more than 93 percent of the world’s United Nations member states.