

Report: Nadarkhani Pressured to Deny Christ

A new chapter in the case of Iranian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani may get your blood boiling.

Nadarkhani was arrested on apostasy charges in 2009 after he protested a government decision that would end up requiring his son to read the Koran in school. Since then, his lengthy court saga has included threats of the death penalty if he refuses to accept Islam.

Most recently, according to Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) reports, Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani, head of the judiciary, has ordered the judge presiding over Nadarkhani's case to delay his written verdict for one year. The judge was specifically ordered to keep Nadarkhani in prison, using whatever means necessary to force him to recant his Christian faith and convert to Islam, says VOM.

The case has been put on hold several times. What's most disturbing this time around is the reasoning behind it.

Christians worldwide were greatly stirred by Nadarkhani's possible fate in the hands of the Iranian government—so much so that they spoke out in petitions to governments and to advocacy groups. Even the United Nations has expressed concern over the issue.

The recent order to delay Nadarkhani's sentence may have been in response to those outcries. According to Present Truth Ministries, the order was designed to cause the international community, specifically Christians, to forget about Nadarkhani's case.

"Once we forget about him, then they are free to execute him," said a spokesperson from Present Truth Ministries.

Down the road, this could have severe implications for Christians in Iran—which already stands as the second-worst persecutor of Christians in the world, according to the Open Doors World Watch List—and for the spread of the gospel.

VOM suggests you take action on Nadarkhani's behalf by talking to your congressmen, telling your friends about the case, or e-mailing the Iranian Embassy. You can even post his prisoner alert profile in your church or Sunday school class, or write a letter to Nadarkhani while he is in prison. Find out how to help here.

In the meantime, pray that Nadarkhani's conviction will be overturned and that his family will continue to trust God during this time.