

Youcef Nadarkhani May Be Facing Execution Order

An execution order for Christian **pastor Youcef Nadarkhani** may have been issued in Iran, according to the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ).

Authorities arrested Nadarkhani in his home city of Rasht in October 2009 on charges that he questioned obligatory religion classes in Iranian schools. After finding him guilty of apostasy, the court of appeals in Rasht in November 2010 issued a written confirmation of his charges and death sentence.

At an appeal hearing in June, the Supreme Court of Iran upheld Nadarkhani's sentence but asked the court in Rasht to determine if he was a practicing Muslim before his conversion. The court declared that Nadarkhani was not a practicing Muslim before his conversion, but that he was still guilty of **apostasy** due to his Muslim ancestry.

The Supreme Court had also determined that his death sentence could be annulled if he recanted his faith. According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Nadarkhani was given the option just weeks ago to be freed from prison if he accepted Muhammad as "a messenger sent by God." He refused.

"It is absolutely critical that we take action now to defend this innocent man's life," Jordan Sekulow, ACLJ executive director, wrote in an action alert. "Pastor Youcef has been illegally imprisoned and separated from his wife and two boys since 2009; and each time the Iranian regime has demanded that he recant his Christian faith, he has responded, 'I cannot.' Now, this Christian pastor's life literally hangs in the balance."

Sekulow notes that Congress is considering a resolution

condemning Iran's **human rights violations** and calling for Youcef's release. The ACLJ is urging every member of Congress to support this resolution. The ACLJ is also taking Youcef's case to the United Nations.

"It is unclear whether Pastor Youcef would have any appeal from an execution order, but we know the Iranian regime has withheld his execution thus far because of international pressure," Sekulow said. "We must keep up the pressure on Iran. As Pastor Youcef stands up for his faith in the face of imminent death, take a stand for him today."

[Click here to sign the petition to free Nadarkhani.](#)