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## IRAN | Pastor Nadarkhani's lawyers still awaiting written confirmation of execution order

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Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has learned that Pastor Nadarkhani spoke to his wife as recently as yesterday, although his lawyers and the Church of Iran leadership are still seeking clarification and written confirmation of a report that the order for his execution has been issued.

The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has not made a decision on Pastor Nadarkhani's death sentence for apostasy, despite two appeals for him to do so from the lower court in Rasht, which originally heard Nadarkhani's case. He and Mr Sadegh Larijani, the Head of the Iranian Judiciary, are the only people with the authority to stop the execution, but without their intervention the authorities are obliged to carry out the Supreme Court ruling, which stated that Pastor Nadarkhani could be executed if he did not recant.

Pastor Nadarkhani has been offered freedom in exchange for renouncing his faith on at least four occasions, but has consistently refused to do so.

According to Iranian law, once the execution order is officially confirmed, Pastor Nadarkhani's lawyers would have a final opportunity to stop the execution if notified in time. However, it is not uncommon for the Iranian authorities to execute a prisoner without notification. In 1990, Pastor Hossein Soodmand was executed without notification.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "In sentencing Pastor Nadarkhani to death for apostasy, Iran has so far flouted its own law and the principles of the international covenants to which it is signatory. We therefore have no confidence that the Iranian authorities will follow due process and notify his family and legal team if a decision to execute him has indeed been taken. We urge the international community to press the Iranian authorities for the release of Pastor Nadarkhani and to urge them to follow their own laws with regards to guaranteeing freedom of religion for Christians and other minorities in Iran."