



7.5.2012

IRAN Pastor Nadarkhani may face new charges in September

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has received reports that Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani may face fresh charges in September, pertaining to crimes against national security and possibly blasphemy.

According to CSW's sources, judges have reportedly received instructions to try Pastor Nadarkhani on new, trumped up charges in order to make his sentence appear more acceptable.

CSW understands that a date for the new trial may have been set for September 8, 2012.

Pastor Nadarkhani is currently in prison facing the death sentence for apostasy, which was upheld following an appeal at the Supreme Court. He was arrested in his home city of Rasht in 2009, soon after questioning the Muslim monopoly of religious instruction for children, which he felt was unconstitutional.

His case has twice been referred to the Supreme Leader of Iran, who has yet to issue a final ruling. He has been offered freedom in exchange for renouncing his faith on at least four occasions, but has consistently refused to do so.

Without the intervention of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, or Mr Sadegh Larijani, the Head of the Iranian Judiciary, who have the authority to halt an execution, the authorities are obliged to carry out the Supreme Court ruling, which stated that Pastor Nadarkhani could be executed if he refused to recant.

Sunday 8 July will mark 1,000 days since Pastor Nadarkhani was imprisoned.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "CSW is deeply concerned at reports that Pastor Nadarkhani may face fresh charges in September. The Iranian government is increasingly bringing charges against Christians on political grounds to mask the fact that like Pastor Nadarkhani and [Pastor Fathi Malayeri](#), they have been arrested and imprisoned solely on account of their faith. We are also concerned by the lack of due process in these cases and continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Pastor Nadarkhani, Pastor Fathi Malayeri and others who are unjustly imprisoned or facing execution following flawed judicial processes. CSW urges the Iranian authorities ensure respect for the right to freedom of religion, which is guaranteed in the international covenants to which Iran is a signatory, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)."