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## IRAN Imprisoned pastor Irani denied hospital treatment

Pastor Benham Irani, currently held in Ghezal Hesar prison in Iran, is being denied hospital treatment for severe bleeding due to stomach ulcers and complications with his colon, which caused him to lose consciousness temporarily last week.

Sources close to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) fear that he may have months or weeks to live. Pastor Irani is being kept in his cell as his health continues to decline. He has received death threats from fellow prisoners and has sustained regular beatings from his cell mates and prison authorities. As a result of injuries sustained during these assaults, he has difficulty walking. He also has trouble with his vision.

Benham Irani pastors the Church of Iran congregation in Karaj. He was arrested in December 2006, and sentenced to six years imprisonment on charges of "action against the state" and "action against the order." The verdict against him includes text that describes Pastor Irani as an apostate and reiterates that apostates "can be killed".

During the first few months of his imprisonment in Ghezel Hesar Prison, the pastor was held incommunicado in a small cell, where guards would repeatedly wake him from sleep as a form of psychological torture. He was moved into a cramped room where inmates could not lie down to sleep, before being transferred to his current cell.

CSW's Press Officer Kiri Kankhwende said, "The treatment meted out to Pastor Irani is inhumane and is in violation of article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that prisoners must be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. The Iranian authorities must be urged to ensure that Pastor Irani receives the hospital treatment he so urgently requires and is protected from fellow prisoners who have threatened his life. CSW continues to urge Iran to honour its international legal obligations and grant unconditional release to Pastor Irani, [Pastor Nadarkhani](#), [Pastor Farshid Fathi Malayeri](#) and all others currently detained or facing execution on account of their faith following flawed judicial processes."