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IRAN | Bail for Iranian Christian arrested in Shiraz house church raid

Roxana Furughi, one of seven Christians from the Church of Iran denomination who were arrested following a raid on a house church in Shiraz on October 12, was released on November 1 after posting bail amounting to \$25,000.

Another member of the group, Bijan Haghighi, was released on October 25 after posting bail of a similar amount. Meanwhile, Afshar Bahmani, one of two members of the house church who were arrested on October 18 after being summoned to Plaque 100, the Intelligence Ministry's detention center, was released 24 hours after her arrest, apparently on health grounds. Six members of house church remain in prison.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has received recent reports of a sharp upsurge in the harassment and persecution of Christians in Iran, particularly converts, as part of what appears to be a concerted campaign targeting Christians of all denominations.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "We welcome the release of Roxana Furughi, Bijan Haghighi and Afshar Bahmani. However, their detention for simply manifesting their faith in communion with others infringes on their religious freedom and contravenes the international covenants to which Iran is a signatory, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Moreover, the highly irregular demand of exorbitant bail amounts to secure the release of detained Christians leaves prisoners and their families in uncertainty and financial insecurity. We call on the Iranian authorities to end this practice and to release without conditions or delay all who have been detained on account of their faith."