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IRAN | Farshid Fathi Among Beaten Prisoners

Evangelical church leader Farshid Fathi was among 30 prisoners who suffered injuries when guards and security agents assaulted inmates in Evin Prison, one of Iran's most notorious jails, on April 17.

Farshid Fathi, who is serving a six-year sentence on false political charges, suffered a broken foot and toe when a guard stamped on them to prevent him assisting an injured inmate as forces from the Intelligence Ministry, Revolutionary Guards, and over 100 prison guards unleashed unprecedented violence on the inmates of Ward 350.

The assault on the prisoners occurred after they protested against an aggressive inspection that had lasted for over five hours. The Iranian authorities have denied reports of the incident. However, a member of the Iranian Parliament, Ali Motahari, requested the families of the prisoners concerned be allowed to visit them, to ensure the truth about the allegations is revealed.

At least 29 other prisoners reportedly sustained injuries ranging from a fractured skull to broken ribs and limbs, with a further 32 transferred to solitary confinement. According to a report by the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, prisoners were handcuffed, blindfolded and severely beaten as they were being transferred to solitary.

Injured prisoners were also refused medical treatment until physicians approved by the Intelligent Ministry arrived.

Speaking to ELAM Ministries after his ordeal, Farshi Fathid said, "Today I celebrate our Lord's resurrection in a mixed feeling of joy and pain in a different way and in a different place. My left foot is in a cast after they broke it last Thursday in violations they applied against helpless prisoners under the excuse of inspections. After three days of pain, finally they took me chained and shackled to a hospital on Easter morning. Though I was in a dire pain, I took it as a gift from our Lord to get out of prison even for few hours."

Evin Prison in Tehran houses many political prisoners, including Christians incarcerated on false political crimes, such as Alireza Seeyidian, Ebrahim Firouzi and Rasoul Abdollahi.

CSW's Chief Operating Officer Andy Dipper said, "CSW is extremely concerned by the reported events in Evin Prison. The treatment meted out to these prisoners is unacceptable and is in clear violation of Iran's obligations under article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that prisoners should be treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent human dignity. We call on the authorities to thoroughly investigate this incident, sanctioning those responsible."

"We also urge the release of inmates currently held in solitary confinement and that adequate

medical attention is administered to those who have been injured, for as long as such treatment is necessary. Furthermore, we request that the Iranian regime releases all prisoners of conscience held in Evin and other detention centers immediately, including members of religious minorities imprisoned on false political charges," Dipper said.