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IRAN | Shahin Lahouti Returned to Prison

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has learned that musician Shahin Lahouti, a convert to Christianity, has been returned to prison after being released in December 2013.

Lahouti was initially arrested along with seven other Christians during a raid on a prayer meeting in October 2012. He was sentenced to two and a half years in prison on political charges before being released on bail and on the condition he took no further part in Christian activities. Sources have recently informed CSW that Lahouti's bail was revoked, and he was returned to prison approximately three weeks ago. Further details are not yet available; however, sources state that during his release Lahouti had been under "pressure" from the authorities.

In other news, Silas Rabbani, a deacon of the Church of Iran in Karaj, was detained on May 5. Reportedly three VEVAK intelligence agents arrested him at his home late at night and informed his family that more arrests of Christians would follow soon.

CSW's Chief Operating Officer Andy Dipper said, "We are deeply concerned that Mr. Lahouti has been returned to prison. His initial conviction and sentencing were unjust and traumatic for him, his bail conditions were unacceptable, and his re-imprisonment compounds this injustice. It is also disturbing to hear of the arrest of Mr. Rabbani and of the threat of additional arrests by the security services. We urge the Government of Iran to halt its harassment and imprisonment of religious minorities and to uphold freedom of religion or belief, as outlined in covenants to which Iran is party."