

Iranian & Christians International

44 YEARS OF FAITHFULLY ENGAGING MUSLIMS WITH CHRIST

**“YES, AND ALL WHO DESIRE TO
LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS
WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION.”**

—— 2 Timothy 3:12

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WHAT DOES PERSECUTION LOOK LIKE IN IRAN TODAY?

At **Iranian Christians International (ICI)**, we regularly hear firsthand what persecution truly looks like—not from history books, but from the voices of believers who live it daily.

In Iran, the Christian community is divided into two groups by the Islamic Theocratic Regime:

- **Recognized:** Those from historical Christian backgrounds (like Armenians and Assyrians), and
- **Unrecognized:** Those who are converts from Islam to Christianity—Muslim-born Iranians who leave Islam to follow Jesus.

These converts (the unrecognized group) are considered enemies of the state. The Iranian government views them not only as religious dissidents but as political threats—“Western agents,” “Israeli spies,” and “Christian Evangelical Zionists” seeking to destabilize Islam and the Islamic regime. Their “crime”? Apostasy—planting the seeds of discord among Muslims.

Every year, house church leaders and new believers are arrested, interrogated, and sentenced to long prison terms under accusations of “crimes against national security.” Some are exiled; others disappear quietly. Even family members often reject them.

Meanwhile, Armenian and Assyrian Christians are permitted to exist—but only as second-class citizens. They are barred from sharing their faith in Persian (Farsi) and are forbidden from welcoming converts into their churches. Those who do risk heavy government punishment.

Kamyar's Story

Kamyar, an Iranian Muslim convert to Christianity, is a husband and father of two. Quietly and faithfully, he pastored **seven underground house churches** across Iran.

Late one night at 11 p.m., his home was **raided by Iranian intelligence agents**.

His charge? “**Zionist Evangelical Christianity**.” He was accused of **undermining national security**—a common label used to criminalize those who share the Gospel.

Kamyar was immediately taken and placed in **solitary confinement for 37 days**. When he was finally released from isolation, he said, “*I didn't know how to relate to people anymore.*”

After his confinement, he was subjected to 30 terrifying interrogations, each lasting a minimum of four hours. The final outcome of the 600-page accusation was devastating: return to prison to await execution.

Through the efforts of lawyers, his sentence was reduced to **15 years in prison**. When his family was finally able to **secure temporary bail for a short visit**, Kamyar fled—**escaping through the mountains into Turkey**, where he now lives in hiding with his family, seeking asylum.

Exiled Without a Trial

One of the **dirtiest strategies used by the Islamists** is to relentlessly pressure Christians in order to **force them into self-exile**. Through harassment, interrogation, financial extortion, and the constant threat of arrest, the regime makes everyday life **intolerable for converts**.

They want Christians to **flee the country quietly**, forfeiting their bail and abandoning their homes—so the regime avoids international scrutiny while still **crushing the underground church**.

It's persecution without the noise of violence—but with the same brutal outcome: **displacement, fear, and broken families**.

The Persecution Doesn't End at the Border

For Iranian Christians who flee to Turkey—like Kamyar—their suffering doesn't end. It simply **takes a different shape**.

Turkey, though not as openly hostile as Iran, is still a **Muslim-majority nation** where converts from Islam face ongoing pressure, surveillance, and threats. Most live in legal limbo, often waiting **many years for asylum** in poor conditions, with limited to no access to jobs, healthcare, or education.

Many are targeted by extremist groups, harassed by locals, or even **monitored by Iranian agents** operating across the border. They are **not free to share their faith openly**. And while they may have escaped prison, **they have not escaped fear**.

This is the reality for **thousands of Iranian believers** who have left everything for Christ—only to find themselves vulnerable once again even outside of their birth country.

From One Oppressor to Another

In 2015, the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** transferred the refugee screening and interview process in Turkey to the **Turkish Immigration Office**.

This change had devastating consequences for people like Kamyar.

Now, every Iranian convert seeking asylum in Turkey is **interviewed not by a neutral UN official, but by a Turkish government employee**—often a practicing Muslim. For an ex-Muslim, this means the person deciding your future sees you as a **traitor, an unclean apostate, and an infidel**.

These interviews are **never fair**. Many times, the Muslim interviewer tells the asylum seeker, “*Christians have no problem living in Iran.*”

The process is heavily biased, often discriminatory, and for most, ends in rejection.

Even worse, the **interpreters** present during these interviews are frequently **Iranian or Afghan Muslims**—some with **direct ties to the Iranian regime**. These individuals are often strategically placed to gather **sensitive information on Christian converts** and report back to Tehran.

To help protect and defend these believers, **ICI has hired multiple Turkish immigration lawyers** to appeal denied cases. But despite every effort, **not one appeal has succeeded**. These lawyers are part of the same compromised system.

As a result, many of these believers have been **stranded, stuck, or forced to live illegally** under the shadow of an Islamic government, **without a way forward, and unable to return home**.

Our Comfort Only Comes from His Word

In the face of all this suffering, only the words of Jesus bring lasting comfort. When you see the world through an eternal lens, everything changes:

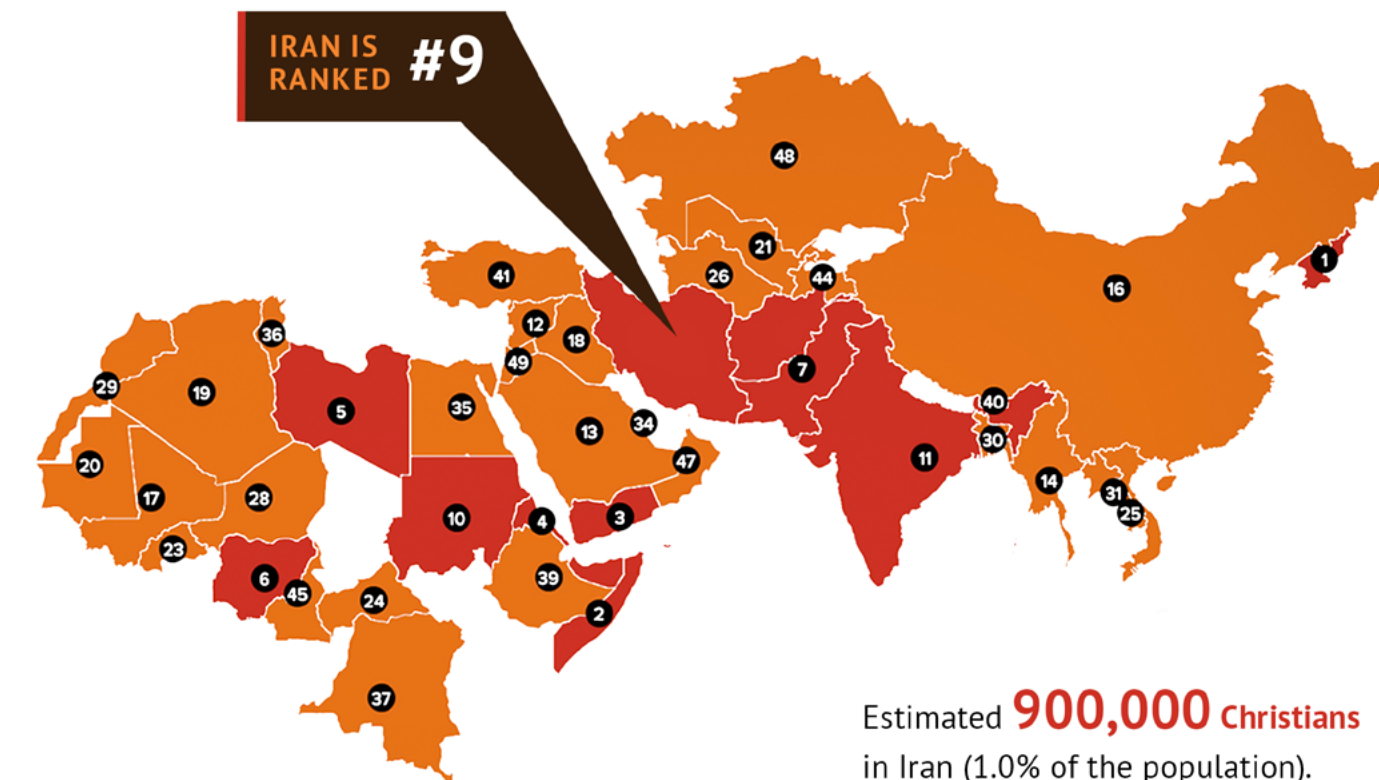
“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
—Matthew 5:10-12

Let us stand with our persecuted brothers and sisters—because the only people they have is us.

It's God's family. It's you and I.

Persecution by the Numbers: Iran & Beyond

IRAN IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT



#9 on the 2025 Open Doors World Watch List of the most dangerous countries for Christians.

Estimated **900,000 Christians** in Iran (1.0% of the population).

Over **1,000 Iranian Christians** forced to flee the country every year.

CRACKDOWNS IN IRAN (RECENT DATA)



113 Christians were arrested and officially charged for Christian activities—despite the courts' usual reluctance to acknowledge religious grounds for prosecution. (October 2023 - September 2024).



43 imprisoned long term and **1,000+** going through interrogation.



Bail amounts for Christian prisoners range from **\$8,000 to \$150,000**, often requiring families to hand over home deeds or businesses resulting in bankruptcy.

All four remaining Persian-language above the ground churches were shut down after COVID and remain closed.



SURVEILLANCE AND INTERROGATION



Christian activities are **monitored online and offline**.

Social media posts or possession of Persian Bibles can be used as evidence in trials.



Converts are frequently accused of "**crimes against national security**" or being part of a "**Zionist cult**."

LEGAL DISCRIMINATION AND FAMILY PRESSURE



Children of former Muslim Christian converts are **automatically registered as Muslims**.



Women converts face forced marriage to Muslims, loss of child custody, house arrest, and sexual violence during detention.



Converts **cannot legally change their religion** or adopt Muslim children.



Christian students are **denied university admission** if they list their faith.

THE SITUATION IN TURKEY



Since **2015**, refugee interviews in Turkey are conducted by the **Turkish Immigration Office**, not UNHCR.

Translators are sometimes **linked to the Iranian regime** and gather intelligence on Christian refugees.

Asylum seekers are interviewed by **Muslim officials**, often biased against ex-Muslims.

ICI has hired multiple immigration lawyers in Turkey, but since 2023 **not a single appeal** has been successful.



In southeast Turkey, ICI's church has grown to the point that no single home is large enough to hold the number of believers gathering each week. New Iranian converts keep coming. They are hungry for truth, healing, and discipleship.

The pastors leading this church have lived in Turkey for over 10 years, seeking asylum after fleeing persecution in Iran. After a seven-year wait, their case was denied. Since 2023, they have been living in Turkey illegally, under constant threat of deportation. Their life is anything but normal. One of the pastors told me, *"Only the grace of God is carrying us through."*

Still, they continue to shepherd the flock with faithfulness. Believers crowd into a member's home that is now far too small. We need a building for the church. But how?

What happens if we secure a building and the pastor is caught walking on the street? Or if there's a knock on the door? If he is arrested and taken to a deportation camp, what will happen to the believers? To the building? Who will lead the church?

Planning and strategizing in this situation is almost impossible. We are doing what we can, but as the apostle Paul wrote:

"We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed..." — 2 Corinthians 4:8–9

Mehrdad's Hope—and the Knock That Changed Everything

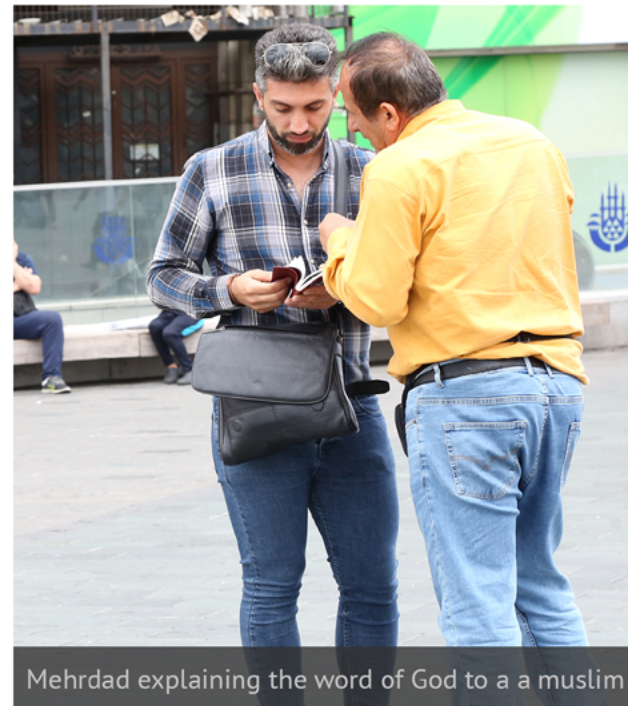
"Brother, if I get to the USA, the persecution will cease."

That's what Mehrdad told me when he was still living under the shadows of Iran's Islamic regime. Like many ex-Muslim believers, he thought reaching American soil would be the end of fear and persecution for him. But the persecution didn't end.

Mehrdad's journey is one we've walked with him closely since 2020. In Iran, he led one of ICI's underground Christian printshops in a conservative Muslim city, printing and distributing thousands of tracts, Bibles, and evangelistic resources to house churches. He rode through the streets on his motorcycle, Bibles in his shoulder bag, praying for the Holy Spirit to guide him. One afternoon, after being struck by a car and bleeding heavily from his head, Mehrdad's first instinct wasn't to call for help—it was to hide the Gospel tracts in his bag. He knew that if they were discovered, the consequences could be far more severe than the accident itself.



Mehrdad on his motorcycle & with his bag



Mehrdad explaining the word of God to a muslim

Between 2021 and 2023, ICI brought him to the ministry's evangelistic outreaches in Turkey. He ministered boldly in the streets of Istanbul, helping lead many Muslims to Christ. But the threats against him in Iran intensified. Intelligence agents began investigating him. A coworker warned him, *"You're playing with your life. They have no mercy."*

In 2023, Mehrdad chose a dangerous but determined path to safety. He crossed eight countries on foot, by boat, motorcycle, and bus. He walked 12 hours a day through the Amazon jungle, gave away his last can of tuna to a fellow traveler, and swam across the Rio Grande River to enter the U.S., exhausted, barefoot, and believing he was finally safe. Or so we thought.

We welcomed him into our home in Colorado Springs. He's lived with us for the past two years, faithfully serving, attending church, and awaiting his second scheduled asylum hearing in November 2025.

But on June 22, 2025, around 3:00 PM, the FBI came to our home and detained Mehrdad. He was taken into ICE custody. We were stunned. Grieved. And moved to action.

Why did they come?

Just a day earlier, in response to the escalating conflict between Iran, Israel, and the United States, the U.S. deployed B-2 bombers. In retaliation, the Iranian regime released a public threat to activate sleeper cells within America. The announcement sent shockwaves through intelligence agencies here.

Fear drove decision-making. Rather than investigate case by case, authorities began sweeping up Iranian nationals across the country, treating every person as a potential threat. It didn't matter if you were a persecuted Christian, a political dissident, or simply someone trying to live in peace. If you were Iranian, you were suspect.

Mehrdad was caught in that storm. Not because of anything he had done—but because of where **he was born**. Even here, far from Tehran, the shadow of the regime still follows people like him. Their fear travels with them. Their suffering continues.

Mehrdad's assigned judge called in sick on the day of his hearing, July 14. A substitute judge introduced new requirements and referred to documents Mehrdad's lawyer never received. The hearing was rescheduled for **eight days later**, leaving him once again in legal limbo.

And Mehrdad isn't the only one afraid.

Two young Iranian ex-Muslim Christian women also live in our home. Both came on student visas. They now live in fear of a knock at our door. They know what it would mean to be sent back. They have seen what happens to converts in Iran.

Mehrdad's story is still unfolding. But even now, in detention, **he is evangelizing Iranian and Afghan detainees**, leading Bible studies and encouraging fellow believers behind bars. His courage and calling have not changed.

We are doing everything we can. A legal team is in place. We are contacting advocacy organizations and praying for a miracle.

But we need your help.

Please Pray for Mehrdad

- For favor and clarity in his upcoming hearing.
- For strength, peace, and protection while in detention.
- For the two Iranian young women in our home, who live in constant fear.
- For doors to open through advocacy, connections, or legal breakthroughs.
- For all Iranian ex-Muslim believers seeking refuge in the U.S.

This is more than a legal battle. It is spiritual warfare. But we know this: **God is with us. And He is with Mehrdad.**



OUR PARTNERS

FUEL THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL AMONG MUSLIMS

Our Summer Outreach Is Upon Us

At the end of August, we'll be heading back to the Middle East for our summer outreach.

We will **share the Gospel with Iranian and Afghan Muslims, put the Word of God into their hands, and strengthen the persecuted church.**

If you've followed our ministry, you know what this looks like. We've seen miracles on the streets. We've watched Muslims come to Christ. We've seen grown men hold a Bible for the first time and start weeping. The harvest is ripe.

This August, we're going again. And here's what we'll be doing:

- **Preaching the Gospel on the streets** with our trained evangelism teams
- **Distributing printed and electronic Persian and Dari Scriptures** to people hungry for truth
- **Gathering with persecuted believers** who fled Iran and Afghanistan
- **Teaching, encouraging, and ministering to them** to strengthen their faith and encourage them to persevere

These brothers and sisters have paid the price. Some lost their homes. Others lost their families. They don't need our pity—they need our presence. They need the **Word, prayer**, and to know they're **not alone**.

Here's How You Can Be Part of It

Whether you join us on the ground or stand with us from a distance—you're part of this ministry. You can partner with us by:

PRAYING:

Please pray for us as we go. Pray for: divine connections, for us to come across the right people, and for open doors for ministry. Also, pray for those on our team who are traveling to make it safely there, and for the team to walk in unity.

GIVING:

The cost of the believers to come, stay, and evangelize for the week is \$500 each. Plus, there is a cost to put together the packet that we hand out to Muslims. These packets include a Bible, connection card, mini sd card with an electronic Bible, and tracts. The approximate cost per packet if purchased is \$15 (Thank God, a partner ministry is providing the Bibles and mini sd cards.) We are planning to distribute a minimum of 1000 packets that week.

All of this is made possible by our Partners. Thank you, Partners, for standing with us in the calling which God has called to.

With Love,

Mohammad Amin & Susan Faridi



"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news..."—Romans 10:15



Ministry Headquarters Update

Thank you to all who gave towards the Building Campaign Fund. You can watch the video update by scanning the QR code to see what your sowing is accomplishing.



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SECURELY**



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YOUTUBE
youtube.com/MohamadFaridi



WEBSITE
IranChristians.org



PHONE
719-596-0010



E-MAIL
ICI@IranChristians.org



FACEBOOK
@IranChristians