



"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

~ James 1:2-4 ESV

IRAN: Recent Sentencing Includes Pastor's Son

Sources: Middle East Concern, World Watch Monitor

Ramiel Bet Tamraz was arrested along with four converts from Islam when security officials raided a picnic that took place northeast of Tehran on August 26th, 2016. Although the five Christians were interrogated and eventually released, Ramiel and his friend were charged with "acting against national security." Both were released on bail in October 2016.

The case was finally presented in court on June 18th of this year, and the presiding judge delivered his verdict on July 11th. Ramiel and his friend were both sentenced to four months in prison. More than half of the sentence was already served before they were released on bail, but this judgement will now leave them with a criminal record. The conviction is being appealed.



Ramiel Bet Tamraz
Photo: Middle East Concern

Ramiel is the third member of his family facing charges due to his Christian faith. The young man's father, Victor Bet Tamraz, is presently appealing a ten-year prison sentence for similar charges. And Ramiel's mother, Shamiram Isavi Khabizeh, is appealing a five-year sentence for "acting against national security and against the regime by organizing small groups, attending a seminary abroad, and training church leaders and pastors to act as spies."

Ramiel's sister, who is now living in Switzerland, presented her family's needs to the United Nations Human Rights Council in June, calling for assistance on behalf of her loved ones and other Iranian Christians in prison. For more information on the legal challenges facing this family, go to [this page](#).

Please remember this pastoring family as they face ongoing legal challenges. May Iran's courts treat citizens of other faith groups fairly and with due consideration, prompting the release of those who've been imprisoned for their faith. Pray that those patiently awaiting deliverance from jail will stand firm as 'prisoners of Christ' (Ephesians 3:1).

Share a Prayer



KYRGYZSTAN: Church Comprising Converts Ordered Closed

Source: World Watch Monitor



Pray that the Gospel will continue to reach hearts throughout Kyrgyzstan.

A church in Kyrgyzstan, attended by many former Muslims, has been ordered to cease operations. Twice in the past few months, Sunday services have been interrupted by a group consisting of local officials, representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and others. While the church tried to settle the conflict, the opposing group has continued to issue threats and insults. "You will not be able to live and carry out your ministry here," members of the church were told.

Pastor "Miran" (his name has been changed for security reasons), who led the church for over ten years, is also a convert from Islam. After converting to Christ, the school where he was formerly employed as a teacher threatened to fire him. Over the years, he faced false accusations and, as a result, has since not been able to find paid work. For the safety of those involved, the location of the church and further details cannot be made public.

As you uphold "Miran" and other members of his church in prayer, ask that these believers will experience the Lord's abiding peace and provision for their every need. Pray that they will also be able to continue meeting together for needed fellowship and spiritual encouragement. In a broader sense, please intercede for the nation of Kyrgyzstan, praying that the truth of God's Word will be made known among its people – resulting in the salvation of many more precious souls.

Share a Prayer



PRISONER UPDATE

TURKEY: Pastor Brunson Remains in Custody

Sources: Middle East Concern, EPCConnection, Christianity Today

Despite the hopes of many around the world that Pastor Andrew Brunson would be released from custody after his latest hearing on July 17th, a judge ruled that he is to remain at least until his next hearing on October 12th.

Pastor Brunson, an American who served the Izmir Resurrection Church for more than 20 years, is facing allegations of conspiring to overthrow the government and espionage. Officials claim that he has been conspiring with a Muslim cleric who is living in exile in the United States. For more information on this case, visit [this page](#).

This recent hearing was the first to allow testimony from a defence witness. Pastor Brunson was also allowed to answer those who were testifying against him. In fact, one of the opponents surprisingly spoke in favour of the imprisoned pastor. Despite this, according to a witness at the trial, "It felt like they had decided the outcome before the trial." Please continue to remember Pastor Brunson and his wife Norine in your prayers.



Andrew Brunson
Photo: World Watch Monitor

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit [VOMC's prayer wall](#). Another effective way to serve the persecuted is through volunteering. For more information, check the [Volunteer Page](#).



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The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1
Tel. (905) 670-9721 Website: www.vomcanada.com

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