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Iran: Christian convert Fatemeh Mohammadi arrested in Tehran and taken to unknown location



Persecution of Christians in Iran: the laws in Iran that grant some limited freedoms to the Christians are generally not considered applicable to converts from Islam to Christianity, who are all too often considered enemies of the state. The U.S. State Department has classified Iran as a “country of particular concern” for “having engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom.”

The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, requests that the government of Iran grant full religious freedom to all of its citizens, not interfering with their freedom of worship in any way.

For previous ChristianPersecution.com coverage of Iran, see [here](#).

“Christian convert Fatemeh Mohammadi arrested in Tehran,” Article 18, January 16, 2020:

Christian convert Fatemeh Mohammadi has been arrested in Tehran and taken to an unknown location, according to the Persian-language news agency HRANA.

The 21-year-old, who after her conversion now prefers to be known as Mary, was reportedly arrested on Sunday near Azadi Square, where protests were taking place following the Iranian government's admission of guilt in the downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane.

A number of protesters were reportedly arrested on Sunday evening, as protests took place in several Iranian cities, though it is as yet unclear whether Mary was partaking in any demonstration.

There has since been no news of Mary's safety or whereabouts and her family are said to be very concerned about her.

On the day of her arrest, Mary published a series of tweets in which she said the Iranian people were facing "soft repression" through being spoon-fed only news that the regime wanted them to read.

In her tweets, she used hashtags that, when translated, mean "hard-pressed" and "suppression is the norm".

She added that tackling "soft repression" is even harder than tackling the "hard repression" of batons and tear gas and said the Iranian regime is "institutionalising false beliefs through selective coverage of the news", and "lies that are bigger and more repetitive make them more believable".

As Article18 has reported, Mary is a rare example of a Christian activist still living in Iran and she has already spent six months in prison as a result of her Christian activity, which was deemed "action against national security" and "propaganda against the system".

Last month Mary, an English-language student, was kicked out of her Tehran university, without explanation, on the eve of her exams.

She told Article18 she believed she had been expelled as a result of her prior conviction and human rights activism.

“The denial of basic and fundamental rights, such as the right to education, certainly can act as a pressure mechanism and is used as a lever to apply pressure on religious minorities and human rights activists in the hope that individuals will halt their activities and abandon their beliefs,” she said.

“Depriving me of my education is certainly intended to exert pressure upon me, and silence me.”...

Iran is the ninth hardest place to be a Christian, according to the annual report from religious-freedom watchdog Open Doors International, released yesterday....

Last year, Mary began a campaign calling for all Iranian Christians – whether from Christian families or converts – to be permitted to go to church.

When asked by Article18 whether she feared for her safety, she responded that she was ready to return to prison, if necessary, in order to fight for the rights of Christians in Iran.

In an article for HRANA, Mary challenged the common misconception that, as there are over 300 churches in Iran and Christians are one of the few “recognised” religious minorities, they are free to practise their faith in Iran.

In fact, as Mary pointed out, those churches are only accessible to members of Iran’s historically “Christian” Armenian and Assyrian communities, whose numbers have fallen dramatically from around 300,000 to perhaps a third of that as a result of emigration, and not the ever-growing community of “Persian Christians” – converts from a Muslim background, of whom there are believed to be between 500,000 and 800,000.

And, as Article18 has reported, even the “recognised” Christians are treated as second-class citizens and closely monitored to ensure they don’t share their faith with Muslim-born Iranians...

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