

First Secretary, Chargé d’Affaires a.i. Mr Gholamali Rajabi Yazdi
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
PO Box 4049 AMB,
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NORWAY

Your Excellency,

I write to express grave concern over the recent increase in arrests of religious minorities in Iran. In particular, the continued detention and prosecution of three Christian converts: Aida Najaflou, Nasser Navard Gol-Tapeh, and Joseph Shahbazian. These individuals face charges for peacefully practicing their faith, actions protected under Iran’s own constitution.

Mother-of-two Aida Najaflou (43) has been imprisoned since February 6, 2025, following her arrest in Tehran. She was held Evin Prison and later transferred to the Qarchak women’s prison. Reports from Qarchak tell of overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, lack of medical facilities, inadequate food, scarcity of safe drinking water, and abusive treatment by prison guards. Aida faces multiple charges, including “propaganda against the regime” based on ordinary Christian practices such as prayer, baptism and celebrating Christmas. Her family has been unable to afford the excessive bail of \$130,000.

Joseph Shahbazian (61) and Nasser Navard Gol-Tapeh (63) were re-arrested on the same day as Aida and remain in Evin Prison. Joseph endured coercive interrogations, while Nasser suffered a stroke while in solitary confinement in Ward 209. Despite his deteriorating health Nasser remains imprisoned. Like Aida, Joseph and Nasser face charges for routine Christian worship, and both men are awaiting trial at Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran.

These cases reflect a troubling pattern of systematic persecution against religious minorities in Iran, including Christians and Bahá’ís. The use of vague national security charges to suppress peaceful religious expression undermines Iran’s commitments under international law, including the ICCPR, to which Iran is a party.

I humbly ask for Your Excellency’s intervention to ensure:

1. The immediate and unconditional release of Aida Najaflou, Nasser Navard Gol-Tapeh, Joseph Shahbazian, and all other religious or belief minorities detained on charges related to their faith or religious activities.
2. That Iran ceases using provisions such as Articles 498, 499, 500 and 513 of the IPC and Article 167 of the Iranian constitution to unjustly detain minority-faith adherents.
3. The full enjoyment of the right to religious freedom for every citizen, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic background, including converts from other religions, thereby amending Article 13 of the constitution in line with Article 18 of the ICCPR.

We trust that your government will take these concerns seriously and act to protect the fundamental rights of all individuals in Iran.

Respectfully,