

IRAN



UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

Iran is home to one of the fastest-growing Christian movements in the region, but following Jesus—especially for someone from a Muslim background—can bring serious consequences.

Christian converts can face surveillance, interrogation, arrest, imprisonment, loss of employment, and pressure to renounce their faith. House churches are particularly vulnerable because gatherings outside government-approved churches can attract the attention of authorities.

Historic Christian communities are permitted to exist under significant restrictions, but Persian-language ministry and outreach to Muslims are heavily controlled. Churches have been closed, and believers often gather quietly in homes rather than traditional church buildings.

Access to Scripture is also restricted. Persian Bibles cannot legally be produced inside the country, making Bible distribution an important part of supporting the growing Church. Believers and partners carefully bring Scripture into Iran and find ways to place God's Word into the hands of people searching for truth.

Despite more than four decades of systematic pressure, the Church has not disappeared. It continues to grow through house churches, personal relationships, Scripture, digital ministry, and satellite media.

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FACTS & CONTEXT

#10 — World Watch List

Iran ranks among the most difficult places in the world to follow Jesus, particularly for Christians who have converted from Islam.

700,000+ Believers

More than 700,000 believers from Muslim backgrounds are estimated to live in Iran, making them the country's largest Christian community.

40+ Years of Pressure

Since the 1979 revolution, Christians have faced decades of systematic restrictions and pressure. Churches have been closed and believers imprisoned—yet the Church continues to grow.

166 Arrests Documented

In 2023, 166 Christian arrests were documented, including more than 100 arrests within a period of only three months.

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MORTADA'S STORY

Carrying Hope Across the Border

As partners from neighboring Iraq, they cross the border carrying Persian Bibles that will eventually find their way into the hands of believers and people searching for Jesus. If authorities discover what they are carrying, they could be arrested.

During one trip, Mortada found himself talking with a Muslim man in a shop.

Their conversation eventually turned to Jesus. Mortada asked the man a simple question: if he had a New Testament, would he read it?

The man's answer was immediate.

Yes.

Mortada knew there was a New Testament waiting in his car.

It was a seemingly ordinary encounter, but it illustrates something much larger happening throughout Iran. Despite government restrictions, there are people who want to know more about Jesus and believers willing to take significant risks to make God's Word available to them.

Church buildings can be closed. Christian gatherings can be restricted. Bibles can be difficult to obtain. Yet the gospel continues to move from person to person and home to home.

Mortada's story reminds us that behind the remarkable growth of the Church in Iran are individual believers willing to quietly and courageously share Jesus.

Name changed for security.

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WHAT THE CHURCH IS DOING

The Church in Iran often looks different from what many of us experience. Instead of large public gatherings and visible church buildings, much of Christian life happens quietly through homes, relationships, and small groups.

ICR partners help strengthen this Church by providing Persian Bibles and discipleship resources, equipping Christian leaders, and supporting house churches as they care for and disciple believers.

Partners also help Christians who experience the consequences of persecution. This can include emergency assistance, practical care, and support for believers who have faced imprisonment or lost income because of their faith.

Even under intense restrictions, believers continue sharing Scripture and introducing others to Jesus.

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WAYS TO SUPPORT

PROVIDE BIBLES

Help get Persian Bibles and discipleship resources into the hands of believers and people who are searching for Jesus.

EQUIP LEADERS

Help train Christian leaders and provide resources for house churches as they disciple a growing underground Church.

CARE FOR BELIEVERS

Help provide practical support for Christians who experience imprisonment, persecution, or loss of income because of their faith.

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PRAYER

Father, we lift up our brothers and sisters in Iran. Give courage to those following Jesus quietly and protect believers facing surveillance, arrest, and imprisonment. Strengthen Christian leaders as they disciple others, and open doors for Your Word to reach those searching for truth. Give wisdom to believers like Mortada who take risks to share the gospel. May Your Church continue to grow even where gathering openly is impossible. Amen.