



Iran: Maryam and Marzieh free

On November 18, Maryam Rustampoor and Marzieh Amirizadeh were released from Evin Prison in Tehran after being held for 259 days, according to Elam Ministries.

Family members picked them up at the prison, and the women expressed heartfelt thanks to Christians around the world who prayed for them during their days in prison.

"Words are not enough to express our gratitude to the Lord and to his people who have prayed and worked for our release," they said.

Maryam and Marzieh were released without bail, but charges against them have not been formally dropped, and they may still face a court hearing in the future.

They were arrested March 5 by Iranian security forces and labeled "anti-government activists." Marzieh and Maryam's apartment was searched and their belongings were confiscated. "Their only crime is that they are committed Christians who follow the teachings of Jesus," Farsi Christian News Network reported following their arrest. "They are being unfairly labeled as 'anti-government activists' because of the hostility of the government towards practicing Christians."



The women were reportedly interrogated numerous times and were held in three different police detention centers before being sent to Evin Prison. On Aug. 8, they were summoned to court and ordered to deny their faith verbally and in a written statement. They were pressured to recant their faith after the chief interrogator recommended they be charged with apostasy. Praise God, they stood firm and replied, "We love Jesus. We will not deny our faith."

Mr. Haddad aggressively questioned the women during the court proceedings and asked them if they regretted becoming Christians. They replied that they had no regrets. When Maryam and Marzieh made reference to their conviction by the Holy Spirit, Haddad told them it was impossible for God to speak with humans. Marzieh boldly asked him if he was questioning God's authority, and he replied that she was not worthy of having God speak to her.

"We are thankful to the Lord for sustaining Maryam and Marzieh—physically and spiritually—during their time in prison," said VOM's Todd Nettleton. "We also thank all those who prayed for them and wrote letters to them at www.prisoneralert.com."

Please continue to pray that Maryam and Marzieh will recover physically from their ordeal, and pray that all charges against them will be dropped. Pray also for other Christians in Iran who are persecuted for their faith in Christ.