

## Iran: What Made You Hate Me?

Eight days after receiving a 15-year prison sentence and nearly a year after he was first detained, Muslim convert to Christianity Amin Afshar Naderi wrote an open letter to Iranian authorities.

“What have I done against you and our country that made you hate me this much? I have learned from the Bible to love my enemies and to pray for those who hate me,” his letter began.

On July 3, 2017, Amin was sentenced to 15 years in prison: 10 years for “acting against national security by organizing and conducting house churches” and an additional five years for blasphemy. Two other believers received 10-year sentences at the same time.

In his letter, Amin said during his interrogations, he had been spoken to abusively, mocked and insulted, but that he prays for the health of his interrogators. He also said his fellow prisoners were forced to sign a false statement against him, and that officials wrongly reported Amin had insulted their religious beliefs.



During the year he has already spent in prison, Amin spent three months in solitary confinement while on a hunger strike. His health deteriorated dangerously, but shortly after receiving the 15-year sentence, he began a new hunger strike.

Amin has been in prison since August 2016, when he was arrested along with five other Christians while at a private party. He'd previously been arrested while at a Christmas celebration in 2014.

His pastor, Victor Bet-Tamraz, one of the two others sentenced in the same hearing, is well-known among Persian Christians. An Assyrian man, he held Persian-language services at his Pentecostal Assyrian Church in Tehran, before the church was closed by authorities. Christian worship in the Persian language is illegal.

You can write a letter to Amin through [prisoneralert.com](http://prisoneralert.com), and you can also petition Iranian officials on his [behalf](#).

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