



ASIA/IRAN - Eight Christians sentenced for "actions against the national security"

Shiraz (Agenzia Fides) - Eight evangelical Christians in Shiraz were sentenced to jail after being found guilty of "action against the national security" and "propaganda against the order of the system". The news was given, in a note sent to Fides Agency by the Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), committed to the defense of religious freedom. The sentence was given on Tuesday, July 16. Seven of them were arrested on October 12, 2012 during an evening raid by the security services on a house in Shiraz where a prayer service was underway. Those arrested were later released on bail. The sentences imposed by the court vary from six to one year in prison. It is expected that the prisoners appeal their convictions. In a statement, the National Council of the Church of Iran said that these charges are "entirely without foundation". "In accordance with the Gospel," the statement said, "the Church is apolitical. However, as loyal citizens we will continue to pray for our leaders and for peace and reconciliation in our nation". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 19/07/2013).