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ASIA/IRAN - A Christian Iranian; rigorous imprisonment for a Pastor arrested unjustly

Tehran (Agenzia Fides) - The Christian Iranian Mostafa Bordbar was released from prison after winning an appeal against the sentence to 10 years in prison, which had been imposed in July 2013. As Fides learns, the release took place on November 3, thanks to the verdict of a court of appeal which acquitted him, declaring the charges against him null and void, such as that of being a member of an organization operating against national security".

As a note sent to Fides by the NGO "Christian Solidariety Worldwide" (CSW) recalls, Bordbar was arrested on December 27, 2012, along with 50 other Christians gathered to celebrate Christmas in a house in the north of Tehran. After a long questioning, the faithful had been released, except Bordbar and Armenian Christian Pastor Vruir Avanessian. The latter was then released from prison on bail in January.

In another sensitive case, Pastor Saeed Abedini, who has dual American/Iranian citizenship, was sentenced to eight years in prison and was transferred on 3 November to the notorious prison of "Shahr Raja" in the city of Karaj. The Pastor is in arm n. 3 of the prison, known for hosting the most violent prisoners in the country. As reported to Fides by CSW, the Pastor was transferred because in the prison of Evin in Tehran, where he was before, he had organized a peaceful protest with other prisoners against the ill-treatment of detainees, which he himself suffered.

In the note sent to Fides, Mervyn Thomas, CSW Director "praises the Iranian judiciary for having ascertained the truth concerning the Christian Bordbar" and "deplores the ill-treatment of Saeed Albedini", arrested, as is the case with other Christians, "on the basis of political charges which are completely illegitimate". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 09/11/2013)

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