



International Christian Concern
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PETITION FOR THE RELEASE OF TWO IMPRISONED AFGHAN CHRISTIANS

December 15, 2010

General David Petraeus
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear General David Petraeus,

It is with great concern that we petition you regarding the wrongful imprisonment of Sayed Mossa and Shoib Assadullah in Afghanistan.

In late May, footage of Muslim converts to Christianity being baptized and participating in prayer gatherings was nationally televised on Afghan network Noorin TV. The broadcast triggered nationwide protests and a government-led crackdown against Christians. On June 1, Agence France-Presse reported that Abdul Sattar Khawasi, deputy of the lower house, called for the execution of converts from Islam on the parliament floor. President Hamid Karzai summoned the interior minister and the head of the country's intelligence agency to investigate Christian organizations suspected of proselytizing; two Afghans were arrested, including Sayed Mossa.

Mossa (45) was arrested on May 31 by security officers working with the Ministry of Interior. He has been imprisoned for more than six months without legal representation or equal protection. In a letter from Oullayat Prison in Kabul dated July 30, Mossa described suffering from sexual abuse, beatings, mockery and sleep deprivation. Through international diplomacy, Mossa has since been transferred to a safer prison, but there is no indication that he will be released. Mossa is due to appear in court on charges of apostasy. CNN recently reported that Mossa “could face a potential death penalty.”

Shoib Assadullah (25) was arrested on October 21 in Mazar-e-Sharif for giving a New Testament Bible to a man who later reported him to local authorities. Like Mossa, Assadullah will be charged with apostasy. Afghan officials have said that his sentence may be anywhere from twenty years' imprisonment to the death penalty. Assadullah's court date is unknown, but he has not been given legal representation. Assadullah is currently in a holding jail in Narshae, a district of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Afghanistan is a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). According to article 18, “*Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*”

According to article 2 of Afghanistan's constitution, enacted with U.S. assistance in 2003, “*Followers of other religions are free to exercise their faith and perform their religious rites within the limits of the provisions of law.*”

We ask that you engage President Hamid Karzai and demand the immediate release of Sayed Mossa and Shoib Assadullah. The U.S. government must hold Afghanistan accountable to the human rights agreements they are bound to.

Sincerely,

International Christian Concern (and attached)



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(Please Print, Do Not Sign)

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