

Mr Yadegary sees his conversion as an important part of his life. He states that he wishes to 'spread the light'. He attends church on most Saturdays and Sundays. This includes services and attendance at confession. References note that in his spare time, he is in charge of collecting donations and providing support for sick parishioners.

The Refugee Status Appeals Authority considered his religious conversion as genuine. However the Authority has found that his fear of persecution is not well founded based on the presumption that if his conversion were kept as a personal matter, it would be possible to avoid the attention of the Iranian authorities.

Mr Yadegary in reply, stated that he would not find it acceptable to hide his faith. Mr Yadegary has taken the 'Christian' name of Thomas and he would not wish to hide his faith if he were to return to Iran.

The Authority accepts that Mr Yadegary is a committed Christian who will 'spread the light', amongst family and friends and yet suggests that he is not at serious risk of harm.

Recent evidence indicates those who actively display their new faith in public, especially by proselytising, can expect to face severe repression in Iran.

Thus, Mr Yadegary has a plausible case however the RAA finding of his appeal is at odds with the following two Refugee Status Appeals Authority precedents:

Refugee Appeal 72323/00 (25 Sept 2001)

Refugee status was granted to a dedicated member of an evangelical church whose religious commitment including spreading and sharing his faith and actively seeking to convert others. He had participated in a weekly radio religious programme in New Zealand.

Mr Yadegary states that he would speak about and explain his conversion to those he met.

Refugee Appeal 74549/02 (30 July 2003)

This was a genuine convert to Christianity, whose refugee appeal was declined, as he would not proselytise and would practice his faith within the confines of his home, where his family would not divulge his conversion to the authorities.

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