

محرران

شهرت حبیب‌السلام بنیاد آگاهی دهنده ی گهواره
ریاست محترم دفتر مقام معظم رهبری

سلام علیکم

بعد از دهیلت و محکمه بهرنامه شماره ۱۲۸۳۲ س مورخ ۱۳/۱۰/۱۰ و دایره ابلاغ اواسط مقام معظم رهبری به ریاست محترم جمهوری در ۱۳/۱۰/۱۰ و به این ترتیب به اطلاع می‌رساند. حسب امر واقع ریاست محترم جمهوری رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی موضوع جهت طرح و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۱۱ و ۱۱/۱۱/۱۱ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۱۱ شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی قرار گرفت و در نتیجه مذاکرات وراثتی گذر جلسه ۱۱۲ مورخ ۱۱/۱۲/۱۰ و شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی به ریاست مقام معظم رهبری (رئیس و سرپرست شورای عالی) در این خصوص به عمل آمده بود مذاکرات و اجازت اخبر مقام معظم رهبری در رابطه با مسائل بهائیان به اطلاع شورای عالی رسید و با عنایت به مذاکراتین اساسی جمهوری اسلامی ایران و مسائل شرعی و قانونی و سیاستهای عمومی کشور، به مذاکره و مذاقه و اعلام نظر واقع گردیده و در راستای تعیین و پیشنهادت به صحن و سایر در برگیره با این ائمه مذکور و با سطح توجه خاص به رئیس مقام معظم رهبری و رهبری جمهوری اسلامی ایران دایره بر آنکه "فرمان رابطه سیاست گذاری در مشن بشود تا همه بکنند چه گرایید بشود یا نشود" با عمل مذاکرات و پیشنهادات به شرح زیر به عمل آمده ریاست محترم جمهوری و رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی ضمن مسامحه و دلنشین نتیجه مذاکرات و پیشنهادات مقرر فرمودند بر آنست به استحضار مقام معظم رهبری رسانده گردد تا ضمن فرمانات لازم بهر ترتیب که صلاح بدید به عمل بیاورد. عمل شود.

جمع بندی نتایج مذاکرات و پیشنهادات

الف: جایگاه کنونی بهائیان در نظام حکومتی

- ۱- بدون جهت آنگاه از سلطه اخراج نمی‌شوند
- ۲- به دلیل آنگاه دیگر بودند و با مجازات نمی‌شوند
- ۳- بهر فرد نظام با آنگاه باید طوری باشد که راه رفتن و تفریح و تفریح آنان تسهیل شود.

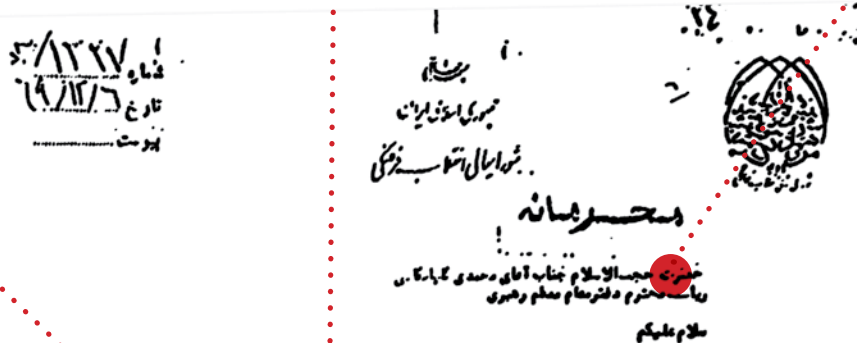
ب: جایگاه فرهنگی

- ۱- در مدارس چنانچه اظهار کردند بهائیانند ثبت نام شوند
- ۲- در حین تفریح و تفریح که کادری و ضابطه بر مسائل علمی و علمی دارند ثبت نام شوند

Note: The graphic on the cover and the facing page shows a digital image of the Persian original of the 1991 Bahá'í Question memorandum, which outlines a broad plan to block the development of the Iranian Bahá'í community. It remains the lynchpin of Iran's strategy of persecution today. The call-outs are various phrases from the memorandum, which was signed by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei.

"regarding the Bahá'í Question"

"counter the propaganda and religious activities of Bahá'ís."



"Deny them employment if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís."

"Deny them any position of influence"

سلام علیکم
بمدافعان حیات و عطف پرتابه شماره ۱/۷۸۲۰ مورخ ۱۳۱۰/۱۰/۱۰ دائره به ابلاغ اواخر مقام
معلم رهبری به ریاست محترم جمهوری در رابطه با ... بهائیان به استناد از مورسانست .
حسود ارجاع ریاست محترم جمهوری رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی موضوع جهت طرح
و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۳۸ مورخ ۱۳۱۱/۱۱/۱۱ و ۱۱/۱۱/۱۱ مورخ ۱۳۱۰/۱۱/۱۱ شورای عالی انقلاب
فرهنگی قرار گرفت و در نتیجه مذاکرات و مراتبی که در جلسه ۱۳۲ مورخ ۱۳۱۰/۱۱/۱۱ شورای عالی
انقلاب فرهنگی به ریاست مقام معلم رهبری (رئیس و عضو شورای عالی) در این خصوص به عمل
آمده بود، مذاکرات و اواخر اخیر مقام معلم رهبری در رابطه با مسائل بهائیان به اصلاح
شورای عالی رسید و با عنایت به نظام قانون اساسی جمهوری اسلامی ایران و مسائل شرعی و
ماتون و سیاستهای عمومی کشور، مورد مذاکره و مذاقه و اعلام نظر واقع گردید و در راستای
تجهیز و پیشنهادت به تصویب و مستوفی در سرخورد با مسائل مذکور و با عطف توجه خاص به
اواخر مقام معلم ایشان جمهوری جمهوری اسلامی ایران دائره پرانکه "در این رابطه سیاست
گذاری دوستی شود تا همه بتوانند چه گریه پشود یافت شود" ما حاصل مذاکرات و پیشنهادات
پتخرج و برچسب بندی کرده به ریاست محترم جمهوری و رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی ضمن
مسابه دانستن نتیجه مذاکرات و پیشنهادات مقرر فرمودند مراتب به استحضار مقام معلم
رهبری رسانده شود تا ضمن فرستادن لازم به ترتیب که صلاح دیده میفرمایند عمل شود .

جمع بندی نتایج مذاکرات و پیشنهادات

=====

الف: جایگاه کلی بهائیان در نظام مملکتی

- ۱- به دون جهت آنان از مملکت اخراج نمی شوند
- ۲- به دول اول آنان دستگیر و زندانی و با مجازات نمی شوند
- ۳- به فرغود نظام با آنان باید دوری باشد که راه ترقی و توسعه آنان مسدود شود .

ب: جایگاه فرهنگی

- ۱- در مدارس چنانچه اظهار کردند بهائیانند ثبت نام شوند
- ۲- حتی التذوق در دولتی که کادر فنی و منطبق بر مسائل عقیدتی دارند ثبت نام شوند

"their progress and development are blocked."

"they must be expelled from universities"

The Bahá'í Question Revisited: Persecution and Resilience in Iran

A report of the Bahá'í International Community
October 2016

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Executive Summary: The Iranian government shifts its strategy in its persecution of Bahá'ís

After nearly four decades, the systematic oppression of Bahá'ís continues with increasing sophistication.

Since 1979, the government of Iran has made it official policy to discriminate against and persecute its Bahá'í citizens – an oppression that has evoked condemnation from the international community, activists, and, increasingly, ordinary citizens inside Iran. In response, the government has shifted its tactics from outright arrests and imprisonments to less blatant forms of persecution, such as economic, educational, and cultural discrimination, in an attempt to conceal its ongoing efforts to destroy the Bahá'í community as a viable entity.

On every front, the Iranian government is facing pressure to end its decades-long, systematic persecution of Bahá'ís. The international community has repeatedly expressed its concern at the UN and elsewhere. Iranian intellectuals and activists inside and outside Iran increasingly call for “Bahá'í rights.” And, more and more, ordinary citizens are giving support to their Bahá'í friends and neighbors by patronizing their businesses or protesting their expulsion from schools.

In the face of such trends, the government has shifted its strategy of oppression, moving away from arrests and imprisonments to more easily obscured measures such as economic and educational exclusion.

As such, its nationwide effort to crush the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran and to destroy it as a cohesive community continues unabated. The government has greatly intensified its campaign of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in the media, apparently in the hope of turning the Iranian public away from any show of support for acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. And, while attempting to conceal its economic and educational repression with various ruses, it continues to prevent Bahá'ís from earning a living or going to university.

Meanwhile, in international forums like the United Nations, the government maintains that Bahá'ís have all the rights of citizenship, are free to attend university, and, even, are “wealthy.”

The phases of persecution

During the first decade of the Islamic Republic of Iran's existence, more than 200 Bahá'ís — mostly the community's leaders — were killed or executed. Hundreds more were tortured or imprisoned. Formal Bahá'í institutions were banned. Tens of thousands of Bahá'ís lost jobs, access to education, and other rights — all solely because of their religious belief.

In the second decade, the government's anti-Bahá'í strategy shifted its focus to social, economic, and educational discrimination, evidently in an effort to mollify international critics. The new emphasis was designed to “block the progress and development” of the Iranian Bahá'í community, according to a secret 1991 memorandum signed by Iran's Supreme Leader that ominously set policy for dealing with “the Bahá'í Question.” It was quietly implemented, even as the government of President Mohammad Khatami projected an image of moderation around the world.

In the third decade, especially following the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, the government stepped up its harassment of Bahá'ís, by using revolving door arrests and increased imprisonment, the identification and monitoring of Bahá'ís, and more raids and harassment at the local level. The government also made clear it would not prosecute those who attacked Bahá'ís, and there was a measurable rise in violent attacks on Bahá'ís and their properties.

Now in its fourth decade, the persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís is marked by a sustained and concealed effort on all fronts — despite the promises of the new president, Hassan Rouhani, to end religious discrimination. Bahá'ís continue to be regularly arrested, detained, and imprisoned. Young Bahá'ís continue to be denied access to higher education through a variety of ploys. And economic policies target small shops and businesses — one of the few remaining sources of income for Bahá'ís and their families.

Since 2005, when the government of President Ahmadinejad deepened the crackdown, there have been more than 860 arrests, and the number of Bahá'ís in prison has not fallen below 50 since 2010. At least 240 Bahá'ís have been expelled from university since 2005 and thousands more have been blocked from enrolling through various ruses. There have been more than 950 specific incidents of economic discrimination.¹

Other types of oppression, such as strict limits on the right to assemble and worship and the wholesale dissemination of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in the government-led news media, also continue. And hundreds of attacks on Bahá'ís or Bahá'í-owned properties — including cemeteries — go unprosecuted and unpunished, creating a sense of impunity for attackers.

A top UN human rights official recently said that the government-led persecution spans “all areas of state

¹These figures, as do all such statistics throughout this publication, reflect the minimum number of incidents. Because of restrictions on the free flow of information, as well as the reluctance of Iranian Bahá'ís to complain or call attention to themselves, there are undoubtedly many more incidents of persecution than have been reported to the Bahá'í International Community.

activity, from family law provisions to schooling, education, and security.”² Put another way: the oppression of Iranian Bahá’ís extends from cradle to grave.

Since the inauguration of President Rouhani in 2013, at least 151 Bahá’ís have been arrested, there have been at least 388 documented incidents of economic persecution, ranging from threats and intimidation to outright shop closings, and at least 28 Bahá’ís have been expelled from university while thousands have been blocked from enrollment. More than 20,000 pieces of anti-Bahá’í propaganda have been disseminated in the Iranian media.

Over the years, numerous documents have emerged that clearly prove such incidents reflect nothing less than official government policy, the aim of which is systematic destruction of the Iranian Bahá’í community as a viable entity in the country’s national life. These documents, moreover, show it is a policy that emanates from the highest levels of government.

Yet Iranians from all walks of life — clerics, journalists, lawyers, human rights activists, and ordinary Iranians — have stood with the Bahá’ís in the quest for religious freedom. Some Iranians have even chosen to work alongside Bahá’ís in their community-building activities.

Moreover, in their response to the persecution, the Bahá’ís of Iran have refused to succumb to the ideology of victimization. Instead, they have found reserves of surprising resilience. Rather than yielding to oppression, Bahá’ís have bravely approached the very same officials who seek to persecute them, using legal reasoning based on Iranian law and the country’s constitution. Despite the daily pressures and hardships they face, not to mention efforts by

the government to encourage them to flee their homeland, many Bahá’ís have chosen to stay. They believe firmly that it is their responsibility to contribute to the progress and advancement of their homeland, an ideal put into action through small-scale efforts, such as literacy programs, often undertaken in collaboration with fellow citizens.

In recent years, Iranian officials have declared that their country is ready to open a new chapter in its relations with the outside world. There are concrete signs to which the international community might look to signify Iran’s willingness to change. These could include President Rouhani informing the

The international community should look for concrete signs of change.

world that the 1991 Bahá’í Question memorandum has been rescinded — and calling for an end to incitement of hatred against Bahá’ís. Another indicator would be to have Iranian diplomats realistically address the discrimination against their Bahá’í citizens, rather than denying that it occurs or refusing even to discuss the topic at all.

Required by their teachings to eschew violence and partisan political involvement, Bahá’ís pose no threat to the government. As such, the government’s policies towards them provide a litmus test of Iran’s genuine commitment to human rights, tolerance, and moderation.

²Heiner Bielefeldt, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, 6 March 2013. www.news.bahai.org/story/945

Iran's False Claims

At international meetings, Iranian officials claim Bahá'ís have “all citizenship rights.” This is untrue.

At the United Nations and in other international forums, Iranian government representatives have claimed that Bahá'ís are not discriminated against in Iran. They say Bahá'ís are able to freely attend university. They say Bahá'ís face no economic persecution, suggesting that many are wealthy. And if they are in prison, Iranian officials say, it is for crimes like spying or acting against the regime, not religious belief.

In general terms, here is what Iranian officials claim – supported by direct quotations from Mohammad Javad Larijani, the Secretary of the Iran's High Council for Human Rights – side by side with the facts.

THE CLAIMS

- Bahá'ís face no official discrimination. Rather, Iranian officials allege that Bahá'ís enjoy the same rights as other Iranians.

“You know Bahá'ís are a minority in Iran, and... they are dealt under the so-called citizen's contract. Under this citizenship contract, they enjoy all the privileges of any citizen in Iran.” – Mohammad Javad Larijani to the UN Human Rights Council, 31 October 2014

THE FACTS

- Bahá'ís are deprived of virtually all citizenship rights. They have no constitutional protection and are subject to a well-documented government policy of discrimination.

- If Bahá'ís are arrested or imprisoned, it is for political or other crimes, not for legitimate religious belief.

"No Iranian citizen has been arrested or put in jail because of being a member of the Bahá'í community... Iran's judiciary deals with them as it does regarding other citizens if they commit a crime." – Dr. Larijani, quoted by the Iranian Students' News Agency on 15 May 2011.

- Bahá'ís face no discrimination in economic activity and, in fact, are wealthy and prosperous.

"Bahá'ís are very much affluent people economically in Iran. They have huge companies. And a lot of successful business." – Dr. Larijani, Press TV interview, 6 March 2016.

- Iran recognizes its obligations to educate all its citizens, and Bahá'ís are free to attend university.

"They have professors at universities. They have students at university. So they enjoy all the possibilities and privileges." – Dr. Larijani, 31 October 2014.

- Iran condemns religious intolerance of all kinds, and Bahá'ís are free to worship.

"They cannot propagate Bahaism among non-Bahá'ís. It is against the law. But they can have their own preaching within themselves. They have their own meetings, in their own worship places." – Dr. Larijani, 6 March 2016.

- Bahá'ís have played a pernicious and destructive role in Iran's history, supporting colonialism, Zionism, and other allegedly anti-regime political movements.

"Bahaism is not a religion in Iran but a diversionary sect and that based on Iran's law, publicity in favor of Bahaism is a crime, but Bahá'ís enjoy complete freedom in their personal issues and nobody opposes them." – Dr. Larijani, 15 May 2011.

- Bahá'ís do not participate in partisan politics, and charges against them almost always refer to their religious identity.

- Bahá'ís are specifically excluded from many sectors of economic activity, including all government employment. They face continual harassment from workplace inspectors in even the smallest of shops.

- Bahá'ís are blocked from obtaining higher education through a series of bureaucratic ruses and mandated expulsions if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís.

- The government sponsors and condones anti-Bahá'í propaganda in the media, contrary to international law.

- The Bahá'í Faith emerged in Iran in 1844 as a new and independent religious movement. Its teachings advocate non-violence and peaceful solutions to all forms of conflict, and call on its followers to promote the betterment of society wherever they reside.

In the coming chapters, this report will deal with each of these claims in turn, showing the degree to which they are both inaccurate and utterly disingenuous.

NUMBERS

Statistical snapshot

Since 2005 at least:

860

Bahá'ís have been arrested.

275

Bahá'ís have served time in prison.

1,000's

Bahá'ís denied access to higher education. This includes various ploys such as claiming "incomplete" computer files in their application to outright expulsion if they manage to enroll.

950

Incidents of economic suppression aimed at Bahá'ís. These include shop closings, dismissals, the actual or threatened revocation of business licenses, and the demolition of businesses.

80

Violent attacks against Bahá'í-owned businesses or properties, including cemeteries. These range from arson to vandalism.

20,000

Items of anti-Bahá'í propaganda have been disseminated in the government-controlled media in Iran.

“regarding the Bahá'í Question”

SYSTEMATIC DISCRIMINATION



In the land where their faith was born, Bahá'ís have no guaranteed rights as citizens

In policy and practice, Bahá'ís are systematically discriminated against or persecuted at every stage of life in Iran.

Iranian government officials claim that Iranian Bahá'ís enjoy all citizenship rights. Such claims are contradicted not only by the number of Bahá'ís who in recent years have been arrested, imprisoned, assaulted, expelled or blocked from university, and discriminated against economically, but also by official documents that spell out a national policy designed to prevent the development of the Bahá'í community at every turn.

Over the years, the UN and human rights groups have released a number of secret documents that outline Iran's policy of oppression towards Bahá'ís.

Foremost among such documents is a high-level 1991 memorandum that specifically addressed “the Bahá'í question,” as the document itself so ominously states.

Drafted by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and signed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, the memo establishes a national policy to promote the gradual eradication of the Bahá'í community as a viable entity in Iranian society.

“The government's dealings with [Bahá'ís] must be in such a way that their progress and development are blocked,” says the memo, which was obtained by the UN and released in 1993.

In its specifics, it outlines a series of measures to restrict the educational, economic, and cultural life of Iranian Bahá'ís.

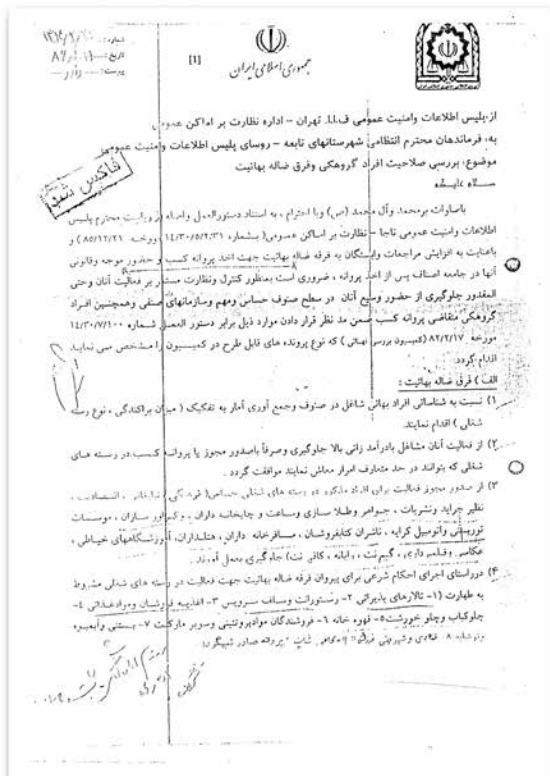
Among other things, it says students must be expelled from schools if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís. It adds that Bahá'í children should be enrolled in schools with a “strong and imposing religious ideology,” apparently in an effort to shatter their identity. And it specifies that individuals are to be denied employment if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís.

It also lays the groundwork for the current propaganda campaign, directing the government to establish an “independent section” within its propaganda apparatus to “counter” the religious activities of Bahá’ís. [See Appendix page 92 for full text]

Still in force

The 1991 memo has never been rescinded. And that it remains in effect is demonstrated by references to it in other, more recent policy documents. These include:

- A 2006 letter from Iran’s Ministry of Science, Research and Technology to 81 Iranian universities, instructing them to expel any student who is discovered to be a Bahá’í, explicitly states that its directive is “in accordance” with the 1991 memorandum. [See Appendix page 98]
- A 9 April 2007 letter from the security unit of the Public Places Supervision Office to police commanders nationwide uses language similar to the 1991 memorandum in outlining the banning of Bahá’ís from a series of specific professions, noting that their activities in “high-earning businesses should be halted, and only those work permits that would provide them with an ordinary livelihood should be allowed.” [See Appendix page 101]



Persian original of a 9 April 2007 letter to police commanders around Tehran that calls for tight restrictions on Bahá’í businesses.



A group of Bahá'ís from around Iran who were arrested and subsequently tried as a group in Yazd in 2012.

Identification and monitoring

In another ominous tactic, the government has directed the police and other agencies to carefully identify and monitor Bahá'ís. This type of identification or classification of minority groups is a well-established precursor to genocide.

Many in the human rights community were accordingly alarmed when a confidential letter from Iranian military headquarters, dated 29 October 2005, surfaced in 2006. That letter asks various intelligence agencies, police organizations and the Revolutionary Guards “to identify persons who adhere to the Bahá'í Faith and monitor their activities.”

Asma Jahangir, then the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, who first broke news of the letter, expressed her concern in a March 2006 press release:

“The Special Rapporteur is apprehensive about the initiative to monitor the activities of individuals merely because they adhere to a religion that differs from the state religion,” said Mrs.

Jahangir. “She considers that such monitoring constitutes an impermissible and unacceptable interference with the rights of members of religious minorities. She also expresses concern that the information gained as a result of such monitoring will be used as a basis for the increased persecution of, and discrimination against, members of the Bahá'í faith, in violation of international standards,” said Mrs. Jahangir. [The text of the letter can be read on page 96.]

Other documents also call for such identification and monitoring. The 9 April 2007 letter to police commanders, referred to above, speaks specifically about the importance of “ongoing monitoring and supervision” of the activities of Bahá'ís.

In 2016, a Bahá'í in Isfahan went to obtain his criminal record from the city's identity verification office. It contained a reference to his imprisonment in the 1980s. The record, dated 29 May 2016, said simply that the charge against him was "Bahaism."

Discrimination at the local and provincial levels

The national policy of official discrimination against Bahá'ís is also echoed in documents that deal with provincial and local administration.

For example, a 15 March 2009 letter from the Public Places Supervision Office of Kerman Province to Rafsanjan police commanders instructs them to restrict real estate purchases by Bahá'ís "[I]n order to prevent the extensive presence of the adherents of the perverse Bahaist sect in trades and organizations, and their activities in high-income businesses, they should only be allowed to have enough income to survive," says the letter. "Therefore, the heads of unions and relevant trade organizations should be sufficiently informed to prevent them from purchasing properties and real estate near each other in one location." [See page 103]

Discrimination in the courts

Nowhere is the official policy of discrimination against Bahá'ís revealed more clearly than in court orders and judgments. In both criminal and civil cases, judges or prosecutors often merely need to cite the fact that a defendant or plaintiff is a Bahá'í as evidence against them. Examples include:

- A 23 June 2011 ruling in Laljin acquitting a Muslim of the crime of usury because the plaintiff was a Bahá'í. The judge ruled that "on the basis of authoritative Islamic sources and authentic fatwas... from the office of His Holiness Ayatollah Khamenei ... that usury against members of the perverse sect is inconsequential." [See page 107]
- A 7 August 2011 letter from the Prosecutor's Office in Arak to the Iran Insurance Company, saying that the signing of contracts with Bahá'ís is illegal. "Based on information received, you have signed a contract with [*name withheld*] in relation to his optical business. He is one of the active members of the perverse sect of Bahaism. Bearing in mind that signing contracts with individuals belonging to the perverse sect is legally prohibited..." [see page 109]

Discrimination against Bahá'ís is embedded in Iran's constitution

Article 4 of the Iranian Constitution states clearly, that all "civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, and other laws and regulations must be based on Islamic criteria."

Article 19 states that "[a]ll people of Iran, whatever the ethnic group or tribe to which they belong, enjoy equal rights; color, race, language, and the like, do not bestow any privilege."

Conspicuously absent, however, is any reference to religion, an absence that opens the door to discrimination based on religious belief.

In Article 13, for example, some protections are offered for Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians. Specifically, it says "Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the *only* recognized religious minorities."

Yet the Bahá'í Faith – Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority and a religion that was born in Iran – is entirely excluded from similar Constitutional protection.

The result, as noted by Shahin Milani in a recent paper in the Columbia University's Journal of International Affairs, is "institutionalized religious discrimination" against Bahá'ís.¹

¹ Shahin Milani, "Situation of the Baha'i Minority in Iran and the Existing Legal Framework," *Journal of International Affairs* (Volume 69, No. 2 Spring/Summer 2016)

"The legal and jurisprudential framework within which the rights of the Bahá'í community are violated in Iran can be directly linked to the country's aims of maintaining a national identity as an Islamic Republic," writes Mr. Milani, a legal analyst at the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center. "The Iranian Constitution and other existing laws institutionalize religious discrimination. Religious edicts by Iran's Supreme Leader and other senior clerics further reinforce a systemic basis for the marginalization of the Bahá'ís."

The Bahá'í Faith — Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority and a religion that was born in Iran — is entirely excluded from Constitutional protection.



The official discrimination against Iranian Bahá'ís was highlighted in a video, produced by ImpactIran in 2016 and widely distributed on social media, that illustrates how Bahá'ís are constantly attacked in the news media.

What UN officials have said recently about Iran's treatment of Bahá'ís



Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, briefs journalists on 27 October 2014. (UN Photo)

"Verbal attacks by state officials against an already vulnerable community like the Bahá'ís are extremely troubling not only because they directly violate Iran's international legal obligation not to discriminate against its citizens, but because they could encourage discrimination and possibly acts of violence against this group by others."

– Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, 8 June 2016 press release.

"The Special Rapporteur expresses serious concern at the continuing systematic discrimination, harassment, and targeting that adherents of the Bahá'í faith continue to face in the country.... In addition to arbitrary arrests, detentions and prosecutions of Bahá'ís, the Special Rapporteur continues to receive troubling reports that Iranian authorities continue to pursue activities that economically deprive Bahá'ís of their right to work, reportedly in line with a 1991 directive issued by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. These policies include restrictions on types of businesses and jobs Bahá'í citizens can have, closing down Bahá'í-owned businesses, pressure on business owners to dismiss Bahá'í employees, and seizures of businesses and property." – Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, 10 March 2016 report to the Human Rights Council.

"The Iranian Constitution recognizes Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians as protected religious minorities, who are free to perform their religious

rites, ceremonies and provide religious education, in accordance with the tenets of their faith. The Constitution does not extend such recognition to other religious groups, such as Bahá'ís, leaving them vulnerable to discrimination and judicial harassment and persecution." – UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, 3 March 2016, report to Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Iran.

"The Bahá'ís have been subjected to persecution and acts of violence. The authorities must protect them from further discrimination and stigmatization." "Measures should be put in place to protect and maintain the cultural heritage of religious minorities, including burial grounds and other sites of religious significance."

– Ms. Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur on minority issues, press release, 4 September 2014

"It's really one of the most obvious cases of state persecution," spanning "all areas of state activity, from family law provisions to schooling, education, and security." – Heiner Bielefeldt, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, 6 March 2013

"The Iranian government has a policy of systematic persecution...with the view of even destroying that religion worldwide...It's a very clear, clearly articulated policy of extreme hostility." It's among the most "extreme manifestations of religious intolerance and persecution" in the world today. – Heiner Bielefeldt, 21 October 2011, at a press conference.

“They are even more unclean than dogs.”

Iran’s religious leaders have issued a number of official decrees (fatwas) stating that Bahá’ís are “deviant,” “misguided,” or “unclean” and should be held at a distance by ordinary people in Iranian society. These decrees have come from the highest level, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

“All members of the perverse Bahaist sect are condemned as blasphemous and ritually unclean. Any food items or other objects that have been in contact with contagious dampness [sic] and have been touched by them should be avoided. It is incumbent upon the believers to counteract the machinations and perversity of this misguided sect.” – Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, in an undated fatwa.

“Members of the perverse sect are [not considered] Muslims, and any form of association with them is religiously prohibited, except in cases where there is hope of guiding them [to the right path].” – Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi in a fatwa dated 17 May 2007.

“Bahá’ís are unclean and association with them must be avoided.” – Ayatollah Behjat, in an undated fatwa.

“It is a misguided sect and absolutely perverse. They are even more unclean than dogs. It is a man-made sect.” – Ayatollah Nouri Hamadani, in a fatwa circulated 2010.



Screenshot of a website showing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in October 2010 giving a speech in Qom, in which he called Bahá’ís “enemies of Islam.” The speech was widely broadcast and commented on in official news outlets.

“directives given by the
Esteemed Leader regarding
the Bahá'í question...”



ARRESTS AND IMPRISONMENTS

Arrests and Imprisonments

Contrary to the official line, Bahá'ís in Iran are imprisoned for their religious beliefs, not other crimes.

Arbitrary arrest and imprisonment are among the most flagrant violations of human rights. Iranian Bahá'ís continue to be arrested, tried, and imprisoned on false charges such as espionage or other alleged “political” crimes – even though the principles of their Faith forbid partisan political involvement. It is evident that the arrest, detention, and imprisonment of Bahá'ís is undertaken as a state policy – one that appears largely designed as a warning to others not to deviate from Iran's official religion.

In January 2016, 24 Bahá'ís in Gorgan were sentenced to a collective 193 years in prison, one of the heaviest rulings issued against Bahá'ís in recent years. Arrested in 2012, some had been harassed or tortured during their interrogations. If their appeals fail, they will join the hundreds of other Iranian Bahá'ís who have been sent to prison for their religious beliefs.

The fact that religion is at the heart of their alleged crimes is made clear by the judge's ruling in the case. The 5 January 2016 judgment issued by the Revolutionary Court of Gorgan against the 24 explicitly states that belief in The Báb, the Prophet-Herald of the Bahá'í Faith, “certainly constitutes propaganda against the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Such court rulings, of which there are many, contradict the claim of Iranian officials that no Bahá'ís are sent to prison for their religious beliefs. The charges against the 24 are unmistakably based on religious issues. They included:

- Forming and managing of unlawful administration and anti-security propaganda to advance “Bahaism.”
- Propaganda in favor of Bahaism and against the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Collaboration with hostile governments by way of assisting and effective involvement in advancing the goals of the sectarian anti-Islamic and anti-Shia and hostile governments.



A photographic collage, put together by Iran Press Watch, of some of the 24 Bahá'ís who were sentenced to a collective 193 years in prison by a court in Gorgan in January 2016.

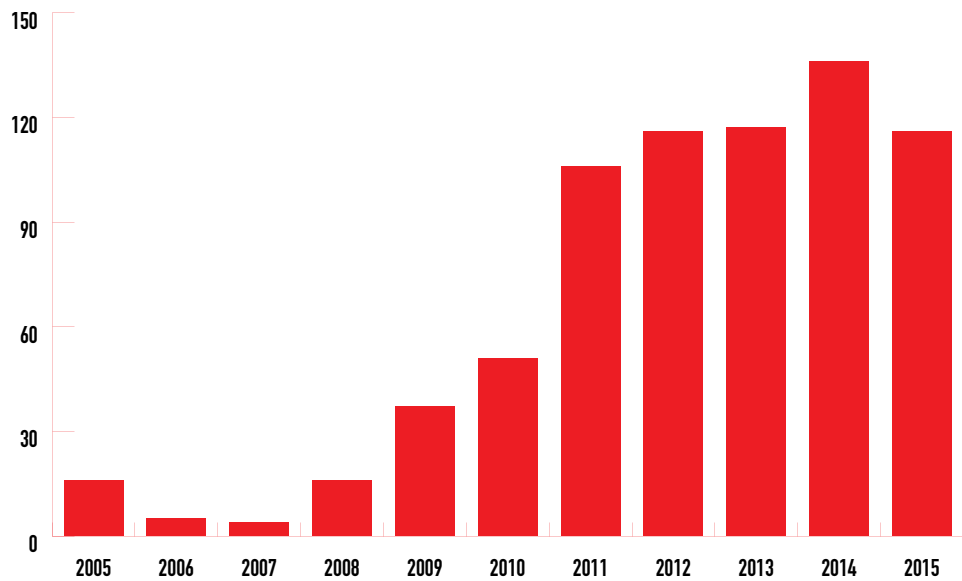
The vast majority of the more than 275 Bahá'ís who have served time in prison since 2005 have faced similar charges, as have the more than 860 who have been arrested since then.

The most notable of such cases was the arrest and imprisonment of seven national-level Bahá'í leaders in 2008. Members of an ad hoc committee whose existence was known to the government, their primary purpose was to tend to the spiritual and social needs of the Iranian Bahá'í community. [See page 20]

The seven are currently serving 10-year sentences on accusations of espionage, the formation of illegal groups, and collaboration with foreign entities — charges that are much like those faced by the 24 in Gorgan.

The court documents also made clear that the government was concerned by the fact that many of the 24 in Gorgan were engaged in study groups or youth programs designed to assist individuals to serve their communities and work for the betterment of society — and, that, if asked, they were willing to speak about their beliefs.

These activities meet the common-sense definition of religious belief and practice. And they are protected under international law, which upholds the right to freedom of religion, including “freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”



Reported number of Bahá'ís in prison, 2005-2015

*These figures reflect the highest number each year and best estimate currently. All such figures are difficult to obtain, owing to the human rights situation in Iran.

Threats against lawyers who defend Bahá'ís are common.

Yet in today's Islamic Republic of Iran, these activities amount to crimes against the state, punishable by long prison sentences.

The arrests and imprisonments of Bahá'ís are supported by a system of judicial and prosecutorial misconduct that shows a national level effort to discriminate against Bahá'ís at every stage of life.

For example, when the 24 Bahá'ís in Gorgan were finally summoned to court in December 2014, their lawyer was given only given 15 minutes to read 5,000 pages of court documents. And prior to the court hearing, the lawyer was threatened

during a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Intelligence and a cleric.

In a similar case in Hamadan, where ten Bahá'ís were arrested and charged with “propaganda against the regime,” a lawyer who was following up on the appeal of their conviction was summoned in 2016 to the local office of the Ministry of Intelligence, where he was threatened and told to resign.

The ten from Hamadan had been arrested in mid-2015, and put on trial in late July that year. During the trial, the judge — who was a member of the clergy — repeatedly questioned the defendants

about their beliefs, openly demonstrating his animosity and religious prejudice against Bahá'ís.

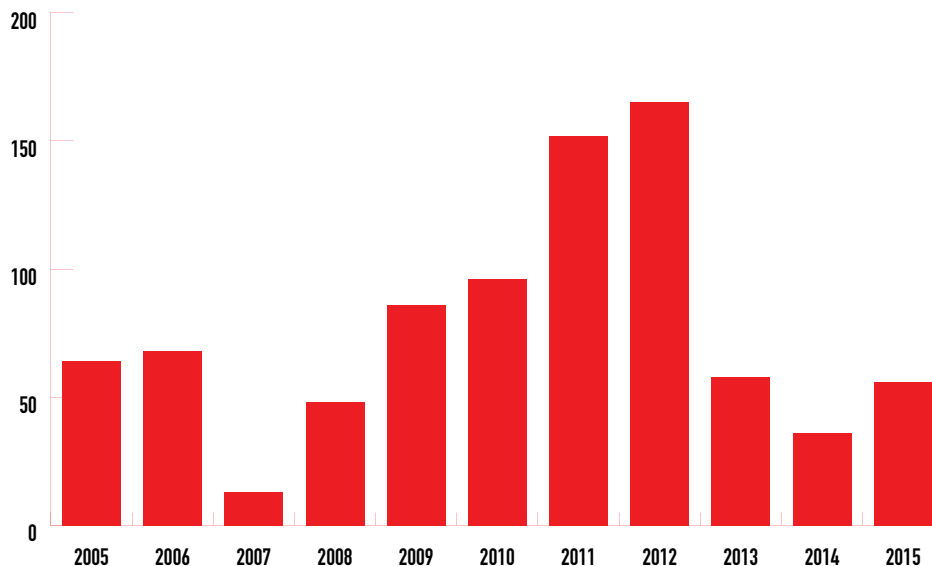
At one point, hearing that the period of fasting for Bahá'ís lasts for 19 days in March each year, the judge responded with scorn, suggesting that Bahá'ís had purposefully chosen these dates for the month of fasting in order to encourage the Muslims, tired of fasting in the hot days and summer heat, to change their religion and become Bahá'ís.

At another point, the judge refused to examine some Bahá'í books, offered as evidence regarding the innocent nature of the Bahá'í teachings, say-

ing that he was “not mentally prepared” to read the books and was fearful of being led astray.

For their alleged crimes, the ten received a mix of one- and two-year sentences.

In addition to judicial misconduct, Bahá'ís — like so many others in the Iranian judicial system — are often beaten or tortured while in custody. Several of the 24 in Gorgan were beaten during their interrogation. Others Bahá'ís have faced long stints of solitary confinement during their detention. Extreme verbal or psychological abuse is also common. As a minimum statistic, there have been at least 87 reported incidents of torture, beating or the use of solitary confinement against Bahá'ís by the government since 2005.



Reported number of Bahá'ís arrested, 2005-2015

*These figures are a minimum number. Because of restrictions on the free flow of information, as well as the reluctance of Iranian Bahá'ís to complain or call attention to themselves, there have almost certainly been more arrests than reported to the Bahá'í International Community.

The seven imprisoned Bahá'í leaders

In May 2008, international human rights monitors went on high alert over the arrest of seven Bahá'ís in Iran.

The seven were members of an ad hoc leadership group, known as the "Friends" (*Yaran* in Persian). They had been appointed to tend to the spiritual and social needs of the Bahá'í community of Iran in the absence of a National Spiritual Assembly, which is a formally elected council that administers the affairs of Bahá'ís at the national level. There is a National Assembly in virtually every country today except Iran. The Bahá'í administration at national and local levels was declared "illegal" by Iranian authorities in 1983.

Six of the seven were arrested in the early morning of 14 May 2008, roused from their homes in Tehran by intelligence agents. The seventh member of the Friends had been previously arrested, two months before, in Mashhad, on 5 March 2008.

The manner of their arrest, and the fact that all seven were initially held incommunicado after their seizure, led many to worry that Iran might do to them what it did to the last group of national level Bahá'í leaders it had arbitrarily arrested roughly 25 years before. That group of nine, save for one member who was away with an illness, was killed and buried in unmarked graves two weeks after their arrest.

International pressure, accordingly, was swiftly marshaled and the seven Friends arrested in 2008 were, after about a month in jail, allowed to have contact with the outside. It was learned they were



The seven Bahá'ís arrested in 2008 are, seated from left, Behrouz Tavakkoli and Saeid Rezaie, and, standing, Fariba Kamalabadi, Vahid Tizfahm, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, and Mahvash Sabet. All are from Tehran. The photograph was taken several months before their arrest.

all being held in Evin prison and – after another two months – it emerged that they were charged with operating an "illegal organization" with ties to Israel.

It was another year before charges were made formal, and just as long before they were allowed to meet with their lawyers.

Finally, in 2010, the seven were put on trial. Over a period of six days, strung out over six months, the seven were shuttled in and out of a closed courtroom and accused of six specific crimes : 1) forming or managing a group that aims at disturbing national security; 2) spreading propaganda against the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran; 3) gathering classified information with the intention of disturbing national security; 4) engaging in espionage; 5) collaborating with foreign governments hostile against Iran; and 6) conspiring to commit offenses against national security.

According to one of their lawyers, "the bill of indictment...was more like a political statement... It was a 50-page document...full of accusations and humiliations leveled against the Bahá'í community of Iran, especially our clients. It was written without producing any proof for the allegations."

In their professions and family lives, the seven would seem to be the type of individuals that any ordinary government would welcome as citizens. All were married and all had children. And, although all had been persecuted in their education or employment before their arrest, they had nevertheless found ways to find gainful employment and contribute to society.

All of these accusations were absurd and baseless. They stem from the historical fact that the religious and spiritual center of the Bahá'í Faith has been in Haifa, Israel, since 1868 as a result of the successive banishments of its prophet-founder by Islamic leaders of the time.

Beyond that, the story of the seven and their arrest and trial is one fraught with violations of national and international law.

As noted, the seven were not told of the charges against them for their first year of detention, and they had virtually no access to lawyers. During their trial, remarks from the bench indicated extreme prejudice on the part of the judge. And, according to one of their lawyers, Mahnaz Parakand, "the bill of indictment... was more like a political statement, rather than a legal document. It was a 50-page document... full of accusations and humiliations leveled against the Bahá'í community of Iran, especially our clients. It was written without producing any proof for the allegations."

They were convicted on three of the charges – and ultimately sentenced to a total of 20 years in prison. That sentence was later revised to ten years, in accordance with the provisions of a new 2013 penal code. The seven are:

- Fariba Kamalabadi was a high school honors student who was denied the chance for regular university. Nevertheless, she obtained a degree in developmental psychology through informal study.
- Jamaloddin Khanjani was a successful businessman and industrialist who established Iran's first automated brick factory.
- Afif Naeimi wanted to be a doctor but could not enter medical school as a Bahá'í – so he took over his father-in-law's textile factory.
- Saeid Rezaie was an agricultural engineer who ran a successful farming equipment business in Fars Province for more than 20 years. He was also the author of several books.
- Mahvash Sabet was a teacher and school principal who was dismissed from public education because she was a Bahá'í. She later ran the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education.
- Behrouz Tavakkoli was a social worker who was fired from his government job in the early 1980s because of his Bahá'í beliefs – so he turned to carpentry to support his family.
- Vahid Tizfahm managed to do an apprenticeship in optometry as a young man and then later ran an optometry shop in Tabriz.

As of this writing, the seven continue to endure harsh conditions in two of Iran's most notorious prisons, despite changes in the national penal code that should have required their furlough or conditional release after five years. The five men are now incarcerated at Gohardasht prison in Karaj, a facility known for its overcrowding, lack of sanitation, and violent inmates. The two women remain at Tehran's Evin Prison.

*At the United Nations in September 2015, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called for a “new chapter” in Iran’s relations with the world.
(UN Photo/Loey Felipe)*



Has Iran really become more moderate on human rights?

For years, Iran faced unequivocal condemnation for its abysmal human rights record.

But the election of President Hassan Rouhani in 2013 stirred hope that the Iranian government would turn to moderation and tolerance.

This idea was fueled by declarations made by Mr. Rouhani during his election campaign. Among other things, he declared that “all Iranian people should feel justice” and that “all ethnicities, all religions, even religious minorities, must feel justice.”

Mr. Rouhani also promised to draft a new “charter of citizens' rights.”¹ That charter would call for equality for all citizens without discrimination based on race, religion or sex.²

In 2015, the hope for greater tolerance from Iran was furthered by President Rouhani’s remarks to the United Nations General Assembly that “a new chapter has started in Iran’s relations with the world.”

In the area of human rights, however, little has changed. In a March 2016 report to the UN Human Rights Council, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon listed numerous concerns, from an “alarmingly high” rate of executions to an intensified “crackdown” on journalists and human rights defenders.

Moreover, said Mr. Ban, “no improvement was observed regarding the situation of religious and ethnic minorities, who remain subjected to restrictions” – a situation that is especially true for Iran’s Bahá’ís.

As of this writing, at least 151 Bahá’ís have been arrested since President Rouhani took office in August 2013. There have been at least 388 incidents of economic persecution. More than 28 young Bahá’ís have been expelled from university while thousands more have been denied enrollment. And, at least 81 Bahá’ís were in prison.

A recent analysis of the legal framework offered by President Rouhani’s Charter of Citizens’ Rights, for example, said that despite “a few provisions that could potentially change discriminatory policies, the overwhelming thrust of the Citizenship Rights Charter follows the established patterns of legal religious discrimination.”³

¹ “Fulfilling Promises: A Human Rights Roadmap for Rouhani,” International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, report, 21 August 2013.

² “Iran: New President must deliver on human rights promises,” 17 June 2013 press release from Amnesty International.

³ Shahin Milani, “Situation of the Baha’i Minority in Iran and the Existing Legal Framework,” *Journal of International Affairs* (Volume 69, No. 2 Spring/Summer 2016)

“Deny them employment if they
identify themselves as Bana is.”

شماره ۱
تاریخ ۱۹/۱۲/۶۷
پرونده

جمهوری اسلامی ایران
شماره ۱۱۱/۱۱/۶۷



محترمانه

جناب آقای دکتر محمد باقر
رئیس هیئت مدیره و مدیر عامل

سلام علیکم

بمدان جناب و محترم، پیرو نامه شماره ۱/۷۸۲۴ مورخ ۱۰/۱۰/۶۷ و اثر به ابلاغ از سوی مقام
محترم رهبری به ریاست محترم جمهوری در رابطه با «...» به جهت این که در صورت
عدم ارجاع ریاست محترم جمهوری رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی موضوع جهت طرح
و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۶۷ و ۱۰/۱۱/۶۷ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۶۷ شورای عالی انقلاب
فرهنگی قرار گرفت و در نتیجه مذاکرات و توافقی که در جلسه ۱۲۲ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۶۷ شورای عالی
انقلاب فرهنگی به ریاست مقام محترم رهبری (رئیس و عضو شورای عالی) در این خصوص به عمل
آمده بود، مذاکرات و اتمام الحبر مقام محترم رهبری در رابطه با مسائل بهائیان به استعلام
شورای عالی رسید و با عنایت به نظام قانون اساسی جمهوری اسلامی ایران و مسائل شرعی و
دانشی و سیاستی عمومی کشور، مورد مذاکره و مذاقه و اعلام نظر واقع گردید و در راستای
تفہین و پیشگیری از تنش و صحت و سقم در دستور کار قرار گرفت و در نتیجه تدوین خاص
از سوی مقام محترم ایشان رهبری جمهوری اسلامی ایران «...» در رابطه با
گفتاری درستی شود تا به پانچند چه گرا به کشور بکشود «...» تا حاصل مذاکرات و پیشنهادات
بشرح زیر جمع بندی کرده به ریاست محترم جمهوری و شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی ضمن
مسابقه و داشتن نظریه مذاکرات و پیشنهادات «...» در رابطه با
رهبری رسانده شود تا ضمن ازناعات لازم به ترتیب در صلاحه به بهائیان عمل شود.

جمع بندی نتایج مذاکرات و پیشنهادات

الف: جایگاه کلی بهائیان در نظام سیاسی

- ۱- به یون جهت آنان از مسکنات اخراج نمی شوند
- ۲- به دلیل آنان دستگیر، زندانی و با مجازات نمی شوند
- ۳- به غیر از نظام با آنان باید برخوردی باشد که راه تفرق و توسعه آنان مسدود شود.

ب: جایگاه فرهنگی

- ۱- در مدارس چنانچه اظهار نکردند بهائیانند ثبت نام شوند
- ۲- حتی التذکره و مدرسی که کادرفری و مسلط بر مسائل عقیدتی دارند ثبت نام شوند

ECONOMIC OPPRESSION

Economic oppression

For nearly 40 years, Bahá'ís have been systematically blocked from participating in Iran's economic life.

Soon after the 1979 Revolution, Bahá'ís were fired from all public sector jobs, were denied rightful pensions, and had community properties confiscated. Large enterprises were confiscated or closed. Today, this oppressive economic exclusion continues, as Iran seeks to deliberately impoverish a segment of its own society.

Handicapped after a fall from a building in the late 1990s, a Bahá'í man in the city of Sari was given permission from the director of a local hospital to set up a small sales kiosk adjacent to the facility.

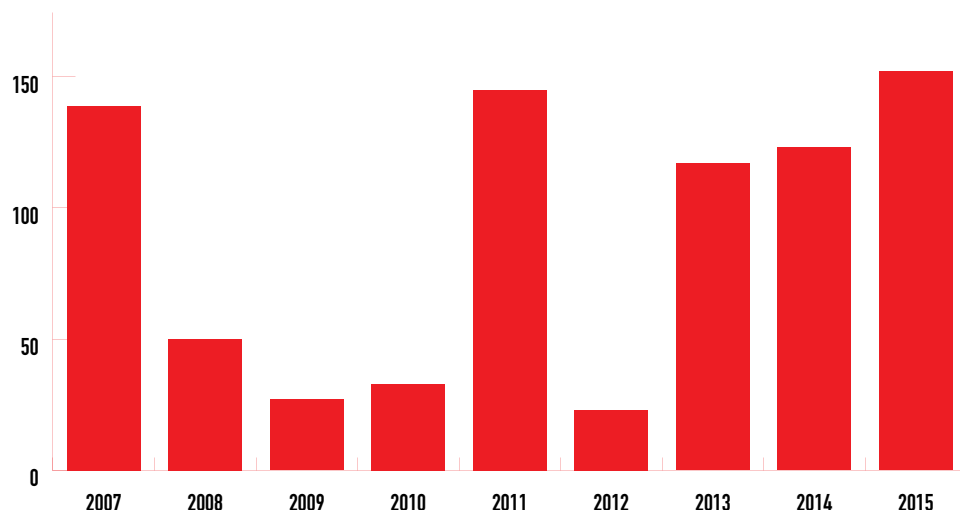
On 30 January 2015, city officials arrived without warning and demolished the man's sales booth. The man met with the mayor and city council and received written permission to re-open his small business.



Photo of an official seal placed on a Bahá'í business, closing it down. The business is a clothing store in Semnan, which was closed in 2009.

Ten days later, on 14 April, enforcement officers came again and confiscated all his goods, saying that because of his faith, he did not have the right to work in that location.

The man again approached the city and was told that officials were unable to help as instructions regarding the closure of his business had come from higher up. Later, he was summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence and



Reported incidents of economic persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís, 2007 to 2015

*These figures reflect a minimum number, owing to the difficulty of obtaining human rights reports from Iran.

offered the chance to re-open his small operation if he were to become an informer on his fellow Bahá'ís — an offer he refused. His wife, at the same meeting, was told that if she recanted her faith, they would be provided with an income.

In late May, the man re-opened his kiosk. After just three days, on 28 May 2015, authorities returned with heavy equipment and completely demolished it.

This sad tale, which may sound like the plot for a political farce, unfortunately reflects all too well the kinds of pressures Bahá'ís face in Iran today in seeking to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families.

Since 2005, when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became president, the Bahá'í International Community has documented more than 950 incidents of economic persecution against Iranian Bahá'ís.

Similar incidents have occurred in virtually every province throughout the country, with government officials committing abuses that include:

- Refusing to issue or renew business licenses, work permits, or trade membership cards to Bahá'ís;
- Ordering the closure of Bahá'í-owned businesses and sealing the premises;
- Issuing instructions to chain stores, government offices and other organizations to avoid purchasing from or stop business dealings with companies and independents if the owners or managers are Bahá'ís;
- Urging the population to shun Bahá'í-owned businesses;
- Instructing landlords to refuse lease renewals to Bahá'í tenant shopkeepers;

- Warning private-sector employers against hiring Bahá'ís or harassing them to dismiss Bahá'í employees and threatening them with closure of their business if they did not comply;
- Conducting unexpected inspections of workplaces, summoning and interrogating Bahá'ís, and raiding Bahá'í-owned stores.

Yet at the UN and in other international forums, Iranian officials deny that such economic discrimination exists.

“They are very much affluent people,” said Mohammad Javad Larijani, Secretary of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the UN Human Rights Council in 2014. “They have plenty of factories, firms and economically they are very active.”

The reality is that Bahá'ís have been officially discriminated against in business and employment since the inception of the Islamic Republic — and such economic strangulation continues. Indeed, efforts to sideline their economic activity now extends down to the level of small, individually run shops and business, which are banned by government policy from many sectors of the economy.

This policy is in line with the 1991 Bahá'í Question memorandum, which says: “Deny them employment if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís.”

This trend has continued — and by some measures intensified — under the administration of President Rouhani. Since he came to office in August 2013, the BIC has documented nearly 400 incidents of economic discrimination or persecution.



A bountiful harvest of apples at a Bahá'í-owned farm near Semnan, before it was destroyed by government agents, who filled in its irrigation wells and bulldozed the family farmhouse in 2015. The action not only deprived a family of its livelihood but also many area residents of much needed food.

Such incidents include:

- In May 2016, 15 shops in Ghaemshahr were sealed and shuttered by the government after the owners closed for one day to observe a Bahá'í holy day. During that same period, 28 shops in Oroumīyeh were similarly sealed, as were two shops in Kashan. In Isfahan, warnings were delivered to eight shops, suggesting they would be closed if Bahá'ís persisted in suspending work on their holy days.
- In January 2015 in Shiraz, intelligence agents visited a number of homes of Bahá'ís, apparently as part of a program to create fear and cause economic disruption in that city. In addition to collecting the usual documents relating to their faith, agents also took all of the financial and work-related documents of the family members. Such materials included archived work records, a company seal, check-books, and property deeds.

- In 2014, agents of the Revolutionary Guards prevented Bahá'í farmers from harvesting their crops in a rural area near Semnan. In response to a protest from one of the owners who wanted to enter his fields, one of the agents offered this absurd response: “The apples of this orchard are sent to Israel. We will leave here after the crop is finished [when the harvest time is over].”
- In February 2014, an optical shop owned by a Bahá'í in Tabriz was closed down by the authorities on the grounds of “market saturation” — although Muslim owners of optical shops in the same location experienced no such difficulties.

The intensification of anti-Bahá'í propaganda has also been clearly aimed at suppressing their economic activity. Many recent articles repeat fatwas stating that Bahá'ís are “unclean” and suggest that faithful Muslims should refuse to associate with them or patronize their shops and businesses.

History of economic strangulation

Soon after the formation of the Islamic Republic, the government seized numerous properties and institutions owned by the Iranian Bahá'í community, some of which were razed. These included buildings used for meetings and worship, cemeteries, holy places associated with the Founders of the Faith, and a large hospital in Tehran.

The government also confiscated or froze the assets of several community funds and savings institutions. An estimated 15,000 individuals lost their savings in these seizures while many Bahá'ís also had their pension benefits terminated.

In addition to periodic raids to close businesses and factories, Bahá'ís face daily discrimination on the smallest economic matters, such as the renewal of business licenses.

In 1980, the government began to dismiss Bahá'ís from public sector employment. Thousands were fired from their jobs in public education, government offices, hospitals and other government institutions. Prior to being fired, many were asked to convert to Islam and were subsequently dismissed for “having beliefs contrary to Islam” after they refused to recant their faith. The ban on Bahá'ís in the public sector became official in 1981.

This prohibition against public employment remains in full force.

Once Bahá'ís had been completely barred from government jobs, attention was turned to the private sector, where in the 1980s, large numbers of companies and factories owned by them were confiscated and closed. Other companies were pressured to dismiss their Bahá'í employees, and banks were told to block their accounts.

Moreover, the 9 April 2007 letter from the security unit of the Public Places Supervision Office

In late 2012, a large, Bahá'í-owned business distributing hygiene products in Tehran was shut down by authorities resulting in the dismissal of 70 employees. The owners were told they would never be allowed to reopen and were advised to leave Iran. Their stock was put on sale by government agents.

to police commanders nationwide specifically excludes Bahá'ís from a wide range of businesses, including hotels and tourism, the food industry, jewelry, publishing, and those related to computers and the Internet. [See page 101]

Shift in tactics

More recently, the government has used a series of more sophisticated, covert tactics in their effort to destroy the economic foundations of Iran's largest religious minority community.

In keeping with the 1991 memorandum's directive to deny Bahá'ís employment if they “identify” themselves, since 2014 authorities in dozens of localities around the country have sealed the shops of adherents who dared to close in observance of their holy days.

In October 2014, for example, Iranian authorities descended on some 80 Bahá'í-owned shops in the cities of Kerman, Rafsanjan, and Jiroft, placing official seals of closure on their doors and posting banners saying the shops had been closed due to “violations of trading rules.” It should be noted that, based on trade union laws in Iran, shop owners are allowed to close their stores for 15 days per year without the need to provide reasons for doing so.

The shop owners were told they have violated the law by closing for a Bahá'í religious holy day, and they were asked to sign a statement: “I hereby promise to close my business place according to the law and calendar of the country, and will observe my religious holy days in coordination with the Public Places Supervision Office (*Amaken*) and the Trades Union Council.” In other words, they were expected to observe national Muslim religious holy days, but not their own.



A banner placed on the front of one of some 80 Bahá'í-owned businesses that were closed on 25 October 2014. It intentionally misleads by falsely stating: “This commercial unit has been sealed owing to violation of trading laws/rules. The owner of this commercial unit should report to the police.”

Bureaucratic delays

Bahá'ís also face daily discrimination in the processing of small but vital economic details, such as the renewal of business licenses. These incidents seldom make the news or feature in reports on human rights violations. Yet they must constantly battle with authorities to keep their business licenses current or prevent their shops from being closed.

Several incidents in Yazd in 2014 illustrate how the government uses a variety of tactics, including excessive paperwork, bureaucratic delays, and even insults, to wear down Bahá'í applicants.

- A taxi driver saw authorities had put “perverse sect of Bahaism” in the religion field on a form for a routine permit to carry passengers outside the city limits. Offended, he complained but was told that nothing could be done. The categorization was an automatic one, said local officials, following a system established by *Amaken*, the national organization that oversees religious “morality” in public places in Iran. He crossed out the words “perverse sect” and signed the form. Later, the man was told that no such permit would be issued because he was a Bahá'í.
- A 29-year-old businessman seeking a business license noticed that, despite having specified his religion as “Bahá'í” on the form, the authorities had changed his religion to “Jewish” on the application form. When he pointed this out, they changed the wording to “Perverse sect of Bahaism.” He was eventually told to fill out further security forms and bring his national identification number, his mobile

telephone number, and the phone numbers of all the members of his family to the security office. Security officials also interrogated the man's Bahá'í employees, recording their national identification numbers and mobile telephone numbers, as well as those of all their family members.

- A Bahá'í tradesman sought to obtain a business permit from the union in charge of household repair shops. Despite the documents having been correctly filled out and submitted in a timely manner, the officials rejected his application. In its prejudicial reasoning, the government was concerned that, because he would have to go to people's homes to carry out his work, he risked exposing Muslim Iranians to an “unclean” Bahá'í.

2016: The government's relentless assault on Bahá'ís continues

Despite hopes for a new atmosphere of tolerance and moderation in Iran, the Iranian government has continued its assault on the rights Iranian Bahá'ís. In the first half of 2016 alone:

- In January, 24 Bahá'ís in Gorgan were sentenced to a collective 193 years in prison, one of the heaviest rulings issued against Bahá'ís in recent years. Arrested in 2012, some had been harassed or tortured during their interrogations. If their appeals fail, they will join the 81 other Iranian Bahá'ís in prison in 2016 for their religious beliefs.
- In February, a Bahá'í enrolled in aerospace studies at the University of Payam-e-Nour in Shiraz was expelled. She was among 26

Bahá'í students who have been expelled from university so far in 2016.

- In March, agents of the Ministry of Intelligence searched the homes of three young Bahá'ís in Tehran and Karaj. They confiscated books and other materials about the Bahá'í Faith, and arrested them. The three had previously complained to the government about being denied access to higher education. They were among at least 18 Bahá'ís arrested in the year so far.
- In April, 17 Bahá'í-owned shops in Mazandaran Province were sealed by authorities after they had closed to observe a Bahá'í holy day. They were among 86 Bahá'í-owned shops and small businesses closed by authorities in 2016 as part of a general campaign of economic persecution.
- In May, the government unleashed a storm of condemnation in the media against Bahá'ís after the daughter of a former Iranian president visited a Bahá'í prisoner who was out on a five-day furlough. Bahá'ís were described as “deviants” who must be “isolated,” among other accusations. The effort added extensively to the more than 20,000 items of anti-Bahá'í propaganda disseminated in Iran since the beginning of 2014.



A collage of some of the 24 Bahá'ís in Gorgan Province who, in early 2016, were sentenced to a collective 193 years of imprisonment. (Collage produced by HRANA)

“they must be expelled
from universities . . .”

EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION

Educational Exclusion

How “incomplete files,” post-enrollment expulsions, and other ruses have deprived an entire generation of access to higher education.

One of the main features of Iran’s program to block the progress and development of the Bahá’í community has been a national effort to prevent young Bahá’ís from obtaining higher education. This policy has undergone several phases, but the end result is the same: thousands of young Bahá’ís have been denied university-level study.

Like many young people around the world, Shohreh Rowhani grew up with high hopes of going to college. She studied hard and in 2011 took the national university entrance examination — a rite of passage for all those who desire higher education in Iran.

She proved herself to be one of Iran’s best and brightest, scoring so highly in her chosen subject — languages — that she ranked 151st in the whole country. The result easily put her in the top one percent of those who took the exam that year.

Buoyed by her impressive grades, Ms. Rowhani — who comes from the northern Iranian city of Nowshahr — began the online process of selecting her courses. But she soon discovered that her application to university had been rejected. The problem, according to a message flashing on her computer, was that she had an “incomplete file.”

The phrase is well known to young Iranian Bahá’ís. For several years now, the term has appeared frequently as one among several ruses crafted to prevent them from actually enrolling even if they pass the national university exams.

Bahá’ís are also blocked from going to university by another method: they are expelled if it is discovered they are Bahá’ís. A conservative tally by the Bahá’í International Community indicates that at least 240 Bahá’í students have been directly expelled because of their beliefs since 2005. It is unknown how many Bahá’ís have been blocked from enrolling by the “incomplete file” ploy — but the number likely runs into several thousand more.

Beyond such efforts, the government has consistently opposed attempts by the Bahá’í community to provide higher education on its own. In the late 1980s, Iranian Bahá’ís established the ad hoc

Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE). Using correspondence courses and, later, online study, it sought to provide the semblance of a university education for the thousands of Bahá'í youth who were otherwise excluded from higher learning. But the government moved repeatedly to shut it down through raids, arrests, and, most dramatically in 2011, the long term imprisonment of key faculty and staff. [See page 34]

As noted previously, Iranian officials utterly deny that Bahá'ís are prevented from going to university. But the facts and figures are quite different — indicating a systematic, national policy of educational discrimination against Bahá'ís.

The history of exclusion

Shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution, large numbers of Bahá'í youth and children were expelled from school. The expulsions were not systematic, focusing mainly on children who were most easily identified as Bahá'ís, but they ranged across the entire education system, from primary and secondary, through to the college level, where the ban was virtually total.

In the 1980s, partly in response to international pressure, primary and secondary schoolchildren were allowed to re-enroll. However, the government maintained the ban on the entry of Bahá'í youth into public and private colleges and universities until 2004.

Until then, the government used a simple mechanism to exclude Bahá'ís from higher education: it required that everyone who takes the national university entrance examination declare their religion. Applicants who indicated other than one of the four officially recognized religions in Iran — Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism — were excluded.



Shadan Shirazi, a Bahá'í student who took the national mathematics exam in 2014 and placed 113th nationally was nevertheless blocked from entering Chalus University.

The Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education: a story of constructive resilience

Being denied access to higher education for years has had a demoralizing effect on Bahá'í youth, and the erosion of the educational level of the community is clearly aimed at hastening its impoverishment. The Bahá'í Faith places a high value on education, and Bahá'ís have always been among the best-educated groups in Iran.

In the late 1980s, Bahá'ís sought to mitigate the effects of the ban by establishing their own informal and ad hoc institution of higher education. Known as the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE), it offered classes in private homes and via correspondence throughout the country, augmented by a scattering of specialized classrooms, laboratories and libraries. By the late 1990s, the Institute enrolled more than 900 students annually.

The Institute, however, was temporarily shut down in 1998 when agents of the government staged a series of raids, arresting at least 36 members of the BIHE's faculty and staff and confiscating much of its equipment and records.

Over time, the Institute gradually began to rebuild itself by shifting online and making use of volunteer educators living outside the country as professors and consultants. At one point in the first decade of the new millennium, it served an estimated 1,000 students, offering university-level programs in 17 academic subjects.



Bahá'í Institute of Higher Education students often gathered at private homes to study together.

The Institute's commitment to high academic standards, international collaboration, and an innovative teaching and learning environment is increasingly recognized, and many of its graduates have been accepted into graduate-level programs in other countries.

In May 2011, the government again moved to shut it down, this time by arresting a dozen educators and administrators who supported the Institute operation on the ground in Iran. In the following weeks, several more were arrested, bringing to 19 the number of BIHE-affiliated educators arrested in 2011.

Of those, 17 were ultimately tried and sentenced to terms of four or five years in prison. Their alleged crimes were given as "conspiracy against national security by establishing the illegal Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education" or "membership in the deviant Bahaist sect, with the goal of taking action against the security of the country."

The fact that Iran would go so far as to imprison 17 Bahá'í educators simply for trying to provide the education that has been denied to Bahá'í students by the government itself shows just how far officials will go to prevent Bahá'ís from obtaining higher education.

For Bahá'ís, because it is a matter of religious principle to refuse to lie or dissimulate about their belief, pretending to be a Muslim for the sake of going to university was unconscionable.

In late 2003, the government announced it would drop the declaration of religious affiliation on the application for the national university entrance examination. Bahá'í youth believed at the time that this cleared the way for them to take the examination and to enroll in university.

However, each year since then, the government has used some type of ploy to prevent large numbers of Bahá'ís from enrolling in university. In 2004, ten of the Bahá'í students who were eligible for university entry were permitted to enroll, but they refused to take up their places out of solidarity with the 790 who, although eligible, had been refused.

In 2006, about 900 Bahá'í students sat for the exam. Nearly 500 passed and were listed as eligible to apply to university. Yet of the roughly 200 who ultimately managed to enroll, the majority were gradually expelled over the course of the academic year as their identity as Bahá'ís became known to university officials.

In 2007, a year for which the Bahá'í International Community has complete data, 1,037 registered for exams. But, in an evolving ploy to block them from higher education, some 800 were told their files were “incomplete” and thus prevented from matriculating. Of the 237 who received their results, only 121 were admitted to university. Over the course of the academic year, more than 100 were expelled, and by May, only 17 students remained in school.

Bahá'ís “must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Bahá'ís.”

That those expulsions reflect official government policy was confirmed in a confidential 2006 letter from Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology instructing Iranian universities to expel any student who is discovered to be a Bahá'í. [See page 98]

Another ploy, in addition to the “incomplete files” ruse, has been to ask suspected Bahá'í students to report to the office of the national college testing organization, where they are then verbally rejected, with nothing put into writing.

All of these tactics — which are still being actively used — indicate that the 1991 Bahá'í Question memorandum remains in effect. As noted earlier, that memorandum states that Bahá'ís “must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Bahá'ís.”

Harassment and exclusion in primary and secondary school

Efforts to block the education and development of the Bahá'í community have also extended down to the primary and secondary levels.

As noted before, all Bahá'í schoolchildren were initially banned shortly after the 1979 Revolution, but after several years they were gradually allowed to re-enroll.

In recent years there have been a number of incidents involving the harassment or even expulsion of Bahá'í primary and secondary school students.

In 2007, for example, the Bahá'í International Community received reports that at least 150 incidents of insults, mistreatment, and even physical violence by school authorities against Bahá'í children had occurred in at least 10 Iranian cities during a 30-day period from mid-January to mid-February 2007.

Those reports indicated that students were being pressured to convert to Islam, were required to endure slander of their faith by religious instructors, and were being taught and tested on "Iranian history" from authorized texts that denigrate, distort, and brazenly falsify Bahá'í religious heritage. They were also being repeatedly told that they were not to attempt to "teach" or discuss their religion with other students. Frequently, being identified as a Bahá'í led them to be transferred to another school farther from home.

Such attacks seemed to subside in the face of international publicity. However, incidents continue to be reported.

In October 2015, a third-grade student in a private primary school in Karaj was expelled by the principal. When confronted, the principal said the young boy was expelled because of his religion.

Several human rights activists protested, even taking the case to the Ministry of Education. They included Mohammad Nourizad, who was once involved in persecuting Bahá'ís as a government official but who has since become a strong advocate for Bahá'í rights in Iran.

But officials from the Ministry of Intelligence became involved and made threats that they would hand the boy over to child-welfare workers by having the father declared incompetent and arresting him. The issue was resolved when the boy was transferred to another school.

“so that appropriate action
may be taken”

ACTS OF VIOLENCE



Throughout Iran, Bahá'ís and their properties have frequently been attacked

These assaults range from outright murder to simple vandalism. Yet attackers are rarely if ever prosecuted, reflecting a culture of impunity.

In its public statements, Iran has suggested that violence against Bahá'ís is a manifestation of popular prejudice beyond government control. Yet the evidence suggests that most acts of violence against Bahá'ís and their properties are undertaken with likely government complicity.

In February 2014, the Moodi family was enjoying a quiet evening in their home in Birjand, a provincial capital in eastern Iran when they were surprised by the appearance of a masked man.

Before they could react, the man attacked, stabbing Ghodratollah Moodi, his wife, Touba Sabzehjou, and their daughter, Azam Moodi. He then quickly departed.

Mr. Moodi was seriously injured in the abdomen. Mrs. Sabzehjou was cut in the neck. Both soon lost consciousness from blood loss.

Ms. Moodi, despite deep wounds of her own, was able to phone for help, and all were soon taken to the hospital. In critical condition at first, they eventually recovered.

The perpetrator has never been caught — nor has the assailant who murdered Ataollah Rezvani in Bandar Abbas in a assassination-style killing in August 2013. Mr. Rezvani was well-known as a Bahá'í in the city and much respected for his honesty and helpfulness. Ministry of Intelligence agents, however, managed to get him dismissed from his work and they pressured him to leave the city. Shortly before his death, he had



The Moodi family, shown recovering at home after a stabbing attack on 3 February 2014. The arm of Azam Moodi is visibly bandaged. No one has been brought to justice for the attack, which sent all three to the hospital.

The Bahá'í International Community have documented more than 68 physical assaults on Bahá'ís since 2005. Of these, not one of the attackers has been prosecuted.

begun receiving menacing telephone calls from unknown persons. His killing also came after senior local clerics attempted to incite the population against Bahá'ís in the city.

Both incidents reflect the degree to which hate crimes against Iranian Bahá'ís have been allowed to flourish in recent years — and the concomitant extent to which the authorities almost always fail to fully investigate these crimes or otherwise bring perpetrators to justice.

The 68 documented incidents of unprosecuted physical violence against Bahá'ís include at least nine cases where Bahá'ís have been murdered or killed under suspicious circumstances. In addition to the case of Mr. Rezvani, these include:

- The murder of two elderly Bahá'í women in their homes in February 2007. On 16 February 2007, an 85-year-old resident of Abbas Abad in Fars Province was found dead in her home with her hands and feet bound and her mouth gagged. The next day, in the town of Mohammadiéh, in the province of Isfahan, a 77-year-old Bahá'í woman was viciously assaulted by a masked intruder in her home. She had been lured out of her house in the middle of the night and then savagely attacked with a lawn rake. Her screams caused the intruder to flee, whereupon she crawled to the home of her neighbor for help. Despite medical attention, her wounds proved fatal, and the woman died on 7 March 2007.
- In 2008, three Bahá'ís in Mashhad received telephone threats and were later intentionally run over by a car in a hit-and-run “acci-



A Bahá'í-owned shop in Rafsanjan that was one of a dozen hit by arsonists in late 2010. The attacks coincided with distribution of an anonymous letter warning Bahá'ís against association with Muslims.

dent.” Two of the individuals were killed and the third was sent to the hospital with serious injuries. Few further details are available about this incident, but no one is known to have been prosecuted for this attack.

- In Yazd in February 2009, an 82-year-old man disappeared after leaving home for a meal at a nearby restaurant. His daughter contacted government agencies for assistance in locating him and was ultimately told his disappearance was related to his efforts to talk about the Bahá'í Faith, which aroused the enmity of his neighbors. She was led to the morgue, where she identified him.

Bahá'ís have also faced death threats. In 2008, for example, a number of Bahá'í families in Rafsanjan in Kerman Province received threatening telephone calls from a man using different pay phones over a two-week period. In many of those calls, the man indicated he had quite specific details about each family. In this series of incidents:

- One Bahá'í man was told he would be beaten and that his son and another Bahá'í in the city were marked for death.
- A Muslim who had been attending Bahá'í meetings was called and threatened with the burning of his shop and death if he did not disclose family details of certain Bahá'ís in Rafsanjan.
- Another Bahá'í man received threats that his daughter would be burned to death.
- A young unmarried woman was told that acid would be thrown on her.



A home in Semnan sprayed with offensive graffiti that reads: “Down with the pagan Bahá’í. Down with America and Britain.”

The incident in Rafsanjan in 2008 — plus at least two dozen other cases of harassment or threats against Bahá’ís there — came after the Friday prayer leader of Kerman and local representative of the Supreme Leader told his followers that the Bahá’í Faith is part of an American conspiracy and that Bahá’í “teachers” are Zionist spies.

In all, there have been at least 250 documented instances of direct threats against Iranian Bahá’ís since 2005. These have included threatening letters, anonymous phone calls, and face-to-face verbal intimidation. It is believed that many

more such incidents have gone unreported. In any other country, such threats would have warranted police investigation. But no such investigations have been documented in Iran.

Attacks on Bahá’í-owned properties

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, there have been countless attacks against Bahá’í holy places and Bahá’í-owned properties and businesses in Iran. Early on, these assaults were carried out openly by agents of the Revolutionary Guards or

continued on p. 45

The decades-long assault on Bahá'í cemeteries

In addition to assaults on the living, the government has long waged — or at least condoned — a campaign of vandalism and destruction aimed at Bahá'í cemeteries.

Soon after the 1979 Revolution, the government and its allies began to seize and destroy or otherwise desecrate Bahá'í cemeteries around the country. In 1981, for example, the beautifully landscaped central Bahá'í cemetery in Tehran was confiscated. The government then leveled the grounds, the site of more than 15,000 burials, removing the gravestones and selling off those of value.

In the 1990s, the grounds were further desecrated when bodies were exhumed and ignominiously loaded onto trucks. Bulldozers were then used to clear the grounds for the construction of the "Khavaran Cultural Center." In other cities, such as Yazd and Shiraz, Bahá'í remains were exhumed by vandals, and families were prevented by the authorities from re-burying their dead.

The majority of these attacks have been undertaken by anonymous perpetrators, often under the cover of night. Yet the use of bulldozers and other heavy equipment in a number of incidents suggest at least tacit involvement by the government, inasmuch as earth-moving equipment would not easily be used without some kind of official approval, at least at the municipal level.



In 2015, vandals cut down at least 120 trees at the Bahá'í cemetery in Oroumiyeh. Despite repeated approaches, local officials did little to stop the vandalism or catch the perpetrators.

In one case in 2007, heavy equipment was used to plow over graves and memorial markers at the Bahá'í cemetery in Yazd.

Fire and graffiti are also often used in attacks on Bahá'í cemeteries. In February 2009, for example, the Bahá'í cemetery of Semnan was attacked by arsonists and vandals. Approximately 50 gravestones were demolished and the mortuary, situated at the cemetery, was set on fire. In addition, anti-Bahá'í graffiti was sprayed on large steel water drums and tanks at the cemetery. The graffiti



The Semnan Bahá'í cemetery after it was vandalized in February 2009. Approximately 50 gravestones were demolished, and the mortuary building was set on fire.

Attacks on Bahá'í cemeteries have continued in recent years. From 2005 through 2015, for example, there were more than 55 incidents of arson, vandalism, or other forms of desecration at Bahá'í cemeteries.

threatened death to "unclean, infidel Bahá'ís" and included references to Israel and England.

In many instances, Bahá'ís have repeatedly approached local authorities asking that their cemeteries be protected and that vandals be prosecuted. Such entreaties have usually been met with inaction. On 21 August 2015, the Bahá'í cemetery in Oroumiyeh was vandalized.

Approximately 120 flourishing trees that had been growing there for 15 years were cut down. For nearly two weeks, the Bahá'ís there went to the relevant authorities to seek justice and demand that the action of the trespassers be stopped.

The second Bahá'í cemetery in Yazd, Iran, was destroyed in July 2007. The tracks left behind and the severity of the damage show that heavy equipment was used.



Desecration of historic Shiraz Bahá'í cemetery

In 2014, in an episode reminiscent of the desecration of the central Tehran Bahá'í cemetery in 1981, elements of the Revolutionary Guards began an assault on the historic Bahá'í cemetery in Shiraz. Once again, trucks were used to carry away soil and human remains, this time to make way for the construction of a new "cultural and sports" center.

The cemetery is the resting place of some 950 Bahá'ís, many of whom were historic or prominent figures in the Bahá'í community of Iran. Interred at the site, for example, are ten Bahá'í women whose cruel hanging by the government in 1983 came to symbolize the government's deadly persecution of Bahá'ís. [See page 66]

Although the site was confiscated by the government in 1983, it had largely been left alone until April 2014, when trucks and heavy equipment were brought to the property and excavations were started for the new building's foundation.

Despite international protests about the desecration, such as a call from three high-level United Nations human rights experts in September 2014 for an end to the demolition, the Guards continued to build on the site. As of September 2016, photographs from Iran indicate that the new complex has been nearly completed.

In 2014, the Revolutionary Guards began excavating in the historic Bahá'í cemetery in Shiraz, removing grave markers and human remains, to clear the way for a planned "cultural and sports" center. The center is now nearly complete, as shown in the inset photo, taken September 2016.



ARSON

other militant groups associated with the government. They often ended with the seizure of the property.

More recently, most of these attacks on Bahá'í properties have been carried out anonymously, often under the cloak of darkness.

While collecting and confirming data on human rights violations is by its nature a challenging task, the Bahá'í International Community has for the period from 2005 through August 2016 compiled the following tallies:

- There have been at least 49 incidents involving arson or firebombing directed against Bahá'ís or Bahá'í properties throughout the country. Most of these attacks have targeted Bahá'í-owned businesses; however there have also been cases of the use, or threatened use, of flammable liquids against individuals.
- There have been at least 55 documented episodes where Bahá'í cemeteries have been vandalized or desecrated. These have

occurred in virtually every region of the country, often under the cover of night, and almost always anonymously. Some cemeteries have been desecrated several times. In a country where respect for the dead is the cultural norm, these incidents are especially concerning.

The government has made no effort to investigate any of these incidents, let alone prosecute or sentence the perpetrators. The facts and details surrounding most of these incidents point beyond active ignorance to willing approval or encouragement by the government. In a number of the attacks on cemeteries, for example, perpetrators have used heavy equipment; it is highly unlikely ordinary citizens could freely use bulldozers and other heavy equipment without government complicity.

The seizure and destruction of Bahá'í holy places and other properties

In Shiraz on 9 September 1979, roughly six months after the Islamic Revolution, a crowd of more than 150 men entered the grounds of the House of the Báb, which is for Bahá'ís one of the mostly holy sites in the world.

Backed by a dozen armed men, the mob proceeded to demolish the House, which in 1844 had been the scene of the birth of the Bahá'í Faith. The seizure and demolition came after months of wrangling between the newly established government and the Bahá'í community over the ownership of the property.

The desecration and destruction of the House of the Báb, which had been designated as a point of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís everywhere, was among the first of such Bahá'í holy places and other properties to be confiscated or destroyed after the clerical regime came to power.

In June 2004, in another example, authorities demolished a historic house in Tehran that had been designed and owned by Mirza Abbas Nuri, the father of Bahá'u'lláh. The house was not only important to Bahá'ís but was also considered to be an outstanding example of architecture of the period.

Mirza Abbas Nuri was widely regarded as one of Iran's greatest calligraphers and statesmen. In July 2004, shortly after authorities demolished the structure, the Iranian newspaper *Hamshahri* published a lengthy article about his life and the architecture of his house. "As he had good taste for the arts and for beauty, he designed his own house in such a style that it became known as one of the most beautiful houses of that period," wrote Iman Mehdizadehin in the article.



The House of the Báb in Shiraz, one of the most holy sites in the Bahá'í world, was destroyed by Revolutionary Guardsmen in 1979 and later razed by the government, as shown below.



In April 2004, likewise, another historic Bahá'í property was confiscated and destroyed. The grave site of Quddus, an early disciple of the Bahá'í Faith, was dismantled surreptitiously over a period of days until the structure was demolished.



Interior of the house of Mirza Abbas Nuri, an architectural landmark in Tehran, during its demolition in June 2004.

In Babol, the grave site of Quddus, a historic figure of the Bahá'í Faith, during its surreptitious demolition in April 2004.



The confiscation of Bahá'í properties

In addition to holy places, numerous other Bahá'í-owned properties have been confiscated and destroyed throughout Iran since the Revolution. These have included the Bahá'í National Center in Tehran and numerous other regional or local centers or sites, along with hundreds of Bahá'í homes and private buildings.

In 1995, for example, more than 150 confiscations were reported in Yazd. Among those ejected from their homes at the time was a blind woman. Authorities confiscated her belongings and took possession of her house despite protests from her neighbors.

In 2006, Miloon Kothari, the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, said at least 640 Bahá'í properties had been seized in Iran since 1980.

"The properties listed included houses and agricultural land, but also Bahá'í sacred places such as cemeteries and shrines," said Mr. Kothari.

Such seizures have continued. In June 2010, about 50 Bahá'í-owned but unoccupied homes were demolished by unknown individuals in the remote farming village of Ivel in Mazandaran Province as part of a long-running campaign to drive Bahá'ís from the area.

Access to the village was blocked and at least four front-end loaders began demolishing the homes. The rubble was then set afire.

Their homes had initially been confiscated in 1983, a few years after the Revolution, when at least 20 families were simply put on buses and expelled. Yet the Bahá'ís of Ivel have continued to seek legal redress, without success, and they have returned each summer to farm their land and harvest their crops in an act of resilience.

As of this writing, none of the Bahá'í properties confiscated throughout Iran have been returned.



Right: Scenes showing the destruction of about 50 Bahá'í homes in the village of Ivel in 2010, taken from a video on a mobile phone. Shown are burning fires and homes reduced to rubble through the use of heavy equipment.

“counter the propaganda and religious activities of Baha’is.”

INCITEMENT TO HATRED

Incitement to Hatred

Among the most revealing examples of Iran's shift in its strategy of persecution has been the dramatic increase of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in official media.

Since the 1979 Revolution, the government has waged a relentless, anti-Bahá'í propaganda campaign in the media. This has continued and intensified in recent years, with more than 20,000 such items published or broadcast since the beginning of 2014.

The Bahá'í Faith is known the world over as an independent world religion, “on a par with Islam, Christianity and other recognized religions,” as stated by historian Arnold Toynbee as long ago as 1959.

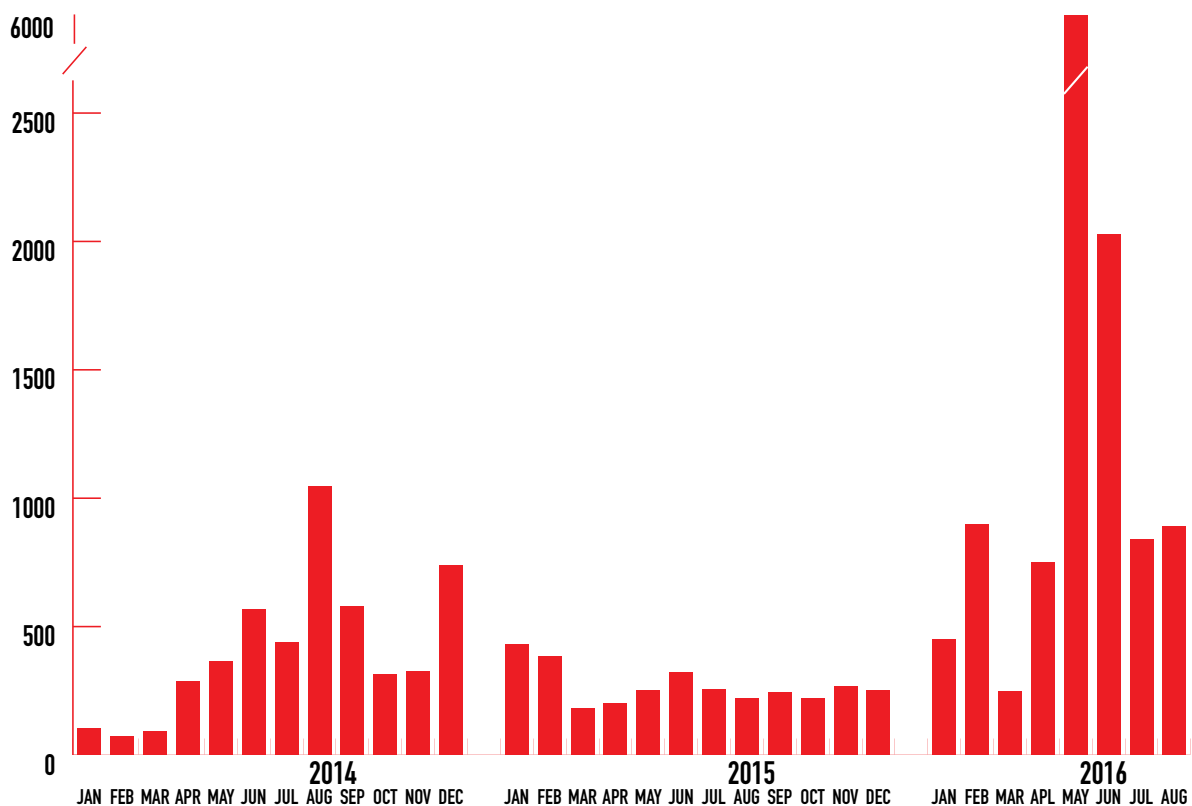
Its teachings advocate progressive ideals like equality for women and men. It emphasizes obe-

dience to government, non-involvement in partisan politics, and assiduous efforts to promote the betterment of society. In addition, its moral code asks followers to uphold the highest standards of chastity, honesty, and trustworthiness.

Yet according to the picture painted by the Iranian media, Bahá'ís are “misguided” or “devi-



Many anti-Bahá'í articles use Jewish or Zionist symbols, such as this montage of an Israeli flag and the word “Bahá'ism” in Persian, which appeared in a 2010 story in Javan Daily that alleges Bahá'ís use alcoholic drinks and satanic emblems to attract people. Bahá'ís don't drink alcohol, and, of course, are not satanists.



Reported number of anti-Bahá'í articles in Iranian media, 2014 to August 2016

ant” “Satanists” whose main concern is to overthrow the government through methods like the “corruption” of youth or spreading “propaganda against the regime.”

Although it originated in Persia, Iranians are told that the Bahá'í Faith is simply a political creation, invented by Great Britain or other colonial powers to subvert Iranian nationalism — and purported today to be aligned with “Zionist” Israel.

Such false accusations seem purposely designed to inflame the sensibilities of a conservative religious audience. For example, it is maliciously claimed that Bahá'ís advocate free love or even orgies in their sexual practices — in addition to often having relationships with close relatives.

The creation and maintenance of this grotesque picture of the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, whose numbers are estimated to be more than 300,000, is an ongoing project of the Iranian government, which has in recent years overseen or condoned the creation and dissemination of tens of thousands of pieces of anti-Bahá'í propaganda.

This effort runs entirely against international law. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory, states that “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”

Yet that does not stop government officials from directly spouting anti-Bahá'í hatred, nor does it stop the government-controlled media from disseminating hateful statements by religious leaders and others against Bahá'ís.

As of this writing, the most recent spike in such anti-Bahá'í propaganda came in May 2016 in response to a meeting between Bahá'í leader Fariba Kamalabadi and Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who had been incarcerated together for three months. The meeting of friends who had once shared a jail cell sparked a storm of anti-Bahá'í rhetoric and hate speech by officials and religious leaders. [See page 56]

But the spike in anti-Bahá'í propaganda that month was hardly an aberration. Since 2014, there have been more than 20,000 anti-Bahá'í articles, web pages, and broadcasts in the official or semi-official media that vilify, denigrate, mischaracterize, or otherwise attack the Bahá'í Faith or its adherents.

The tone for this propaganda is set at the very highest levels of government. In an October 2010 nationally broadcast speech, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei categorized Bahá'ís as “enemies of the Islamic Revolution.” And in 2013, a series of fatwas, or religious decrees, by Ayatollah Khamenei that declared any interaction with Bahá'ís to be unlawful were published.

The increasing intensity of anti-Bahá'í propaganda is one of the most evident signs of the degree to which Iran has shifted its strategy of persecution from overt to covert — all the while never relenting in its ultimate goal of neutralizing the Bahá'í community as a viable force in Iranian society.

A detailed examination by the Bahá'í International Community of more than 400 items of anti-Bahá'í propaganda issued by government or government-controlled outlets from December 2009 through May 2011 found a number of recurring themes.¹ These include:

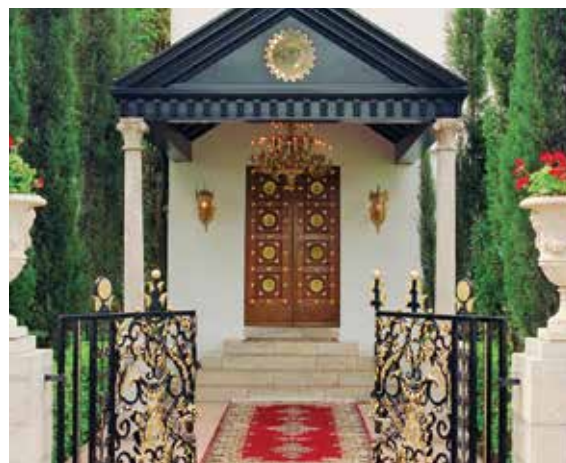
- That Bahá'ís are anti-Islamic, actively working to undermine Islam;
- That the Bahá'í Faith is a “misguided sect” or somehow associated with other “deviant” “cult-like” practices, such as Satanism;
- That Bahá'ís are agents of Zionism or spies for Israel and Western countries;
- That Bahá'ís are morally corrupt, engaging in highly offensive practices;
- That the Bahá'í Faith was created by — or has a historic connection with — imperialist powers, specifically Great Britain or Russia;
- That Bahá'ís were influential in the government of the Shah;
- That Bahá'ís are the instigators of the rising tide of opposition to the government;

¹ For a more complete examination of the themes of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in Iran, see “Inciting Hatred: Iran’s media campaign to demonize Bahá'ís,” a special report of the Bahá'í International Community, October 2011. www.bic.org/inciting-hatred

- That the Bahá'í Faith uses brainwashing to entice Muslims away from their faith;
- That Bahá'ís use sexually attractive young women to lure converts.

Anyone with even only a passing understanding of Iranian culture can easily see how such themes are carefully chosen to create, among the average Iranian, a belief or feeling that Bahá'ís are outsiders in their own land who deserve to be discriminated against — and perhaps even subjected to violence. [See next two pages for responses to such claims.]

The ICCPR, to which Iran is a signatory, states that "Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."



The illustration above left has been featured on anti-Bahá'í websites. It shows a cult worshiper bowing before blazing tombstones superimposed in front of a picture of the entrance to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, shown to the right, which is one of the most holy places in the Bahá'í world — and also recognized in 2008 by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, possessing “outstanding universal value.”

Common accusations against Bahá'ís in Iran

Even before the 1979 Revolution, Shiite religious leaders and anti-Bahá'í groups made a number of false accusations against Bahá'ís to justify their persecution. These myths persist today in anti-Bahá'í propaganda disseminated by the government, and they are often used by Iranian officials in their false claim that the Bahá'í Faith is not a religion, but is instead a political group with designs against the government.

THE CLAIMS: *Bahá'ís were supporters of the Pahlavi regime and the late Shah of Iran; they collaborated with SAVAK, the secret police; and the Bahá'í Faith is a political organization opposed to the present Iranian government, posing a security threat.*

THE REALITY: Bahá'ís are required by the basic principles of their Faith to show loyalty and obedience to the government of the country in which they live. The Bahá'í community in Iran thus did not oppose the Pahlavi regime, just as it does not oppose the present government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Indeed, members of the community have been obedient to the present government, including by following the order to disband all Bahá'í administrative institutions.

Bahá'í principles also require the avoidance of any form of involvement in partisan politics. Accordingly, Iranian Bahá'ís did not accept cabinet posts or similar political positions under the Pahlavi regime. They did not collaborate with SAVAK. On the contrary, the Pahlavi regime

consistently persecuted the Bahá'í Faith, and SAVAK was one of the main agencies of this persecution.

Far from being a threat to state security, Iranian Bahá'ís have a great love for their country, and they are deeply committed to its development. This is evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of Bahá'ís have remained in Iran despite intense persecution, the fact that students denied access to education in Iran and forced to study abroad have returned to assist in the development of their country, and the effort by Bahá'ís in Shiraz to provide schooling for underprivileged children.

THE CLAIM: *Bahá'ís are heretics, apostates, or enemies of Islam.*

THE REALITY: The Bahá'í Faith is widely recognized as an independent world religion — even by Islamic scholars. In 1925, a Sunni appellate court in Egypt recognized that the Bahá'í Faith was an independent world religion, stating that “The Bahá'í Faith is a new religion, entirely inde-

pendent.... No Bahá'í, therefore, can be regarded as Muslim or vice versa, even as no Buddhist, Brahmin or Christian can be regarded a Muslim."

Moreover, Bahá'ís revere Muhammad and His Book, the Quran, as they do Jesus, Buddha, and the founders of the other great religions. Indeed, alone among the followers of the world's other major independent religions, only Bahá'ís recognize the station of Muhammad as a Prophet of God.

THE CLAIM: *Bahá'ís are agents of Zionism.*

THE REALITY: The charges linking the Bahá'ís to Zionism are a distortion of history. The Bahá'í Faith has its world headquarters in Israel because Bahá'u'lláh was sent as a prisoner to the Holy Land in the mid-1800s by two Islamic authorities: Ottoman Turkey and Qajar Persia.

The fact that the Iranian government continues to make such charges is nothing more than an effort by the government to stir animosity against Bahá'ís among its population. This is but the most recent iteration in a long history of attempts to foment hatred by casting the Bahá'ís as agents of colonial or foreign powers, whether of Russia, the United Kingdom, or the United States — and now Israel.

THE CLAIM: *Bahá'ís are involved with prostitution, adultery and immorality.*

THE REALITY: Bahá'ís have a strict moral code and attach great importance to good moral behavior and to the institution of marriage. However, the Bahá'í marriage ceremony is not recognized in Iran and no civil marriage ceremony exists. Consequently, Bahá'ís have been faced with the choice of denying their faith in order to be mar-

ried according to the rites of one of the religions recognized in Iran, or of marrying in accordance with the rites of their own faith. They have consistently chosen to be married in accordance with Bahá'í law. The government does not recognize these marriages and thus denounces Bahá'í wives as prostitutes. The other charges of adultery and immorality against Bahá'ís are based on the fact that, in accordance with the Bahá'í principle of the equality of men and women, there is no segregation of the sexes at Bahá'í gatherings.



Iranian propagandists have often twisted elements of Bahá'í history for their own purposes. Shown is the cover of a special 64-page anti-Bahá'í supplement to JameJam, an Iranian daily newspaper, published 27 August 2007, which carried misleading and inflammatory articles about the history of the Bahá'í Faith. Such articles frequently allege it was a colonial creation. The reality is that Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, shown in the cover photo, was being knighted by the British for his work helping to feed people in Palestine during World War I.

A courageous show of solidarity or a “very ugly and obscene act?”

Few recent incidents tell so revealingly of the disconnect between Iran’s external posture and its internal policy toward Bahá’ís as does the recent meeting between two friends, one a Bahá’í prisoner on furlough and the other a well-known Muslim.

The meeting caused a storm of denunciation of the Bahá’í Faith in the Iranian media – and the outpouring of invective was so furious it was reported on by the New York Times, the BBC, and other major international media outlets.

One top Iranian government official – Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Mohseni Eje – called the meeting “a very ugly and obscene act.” Scores of religious leaders joined in, saying “Consorting with Bahá’ís and friendship with them is against the teachings of Islam” and that Bahá’ís are “deviants” who must be “isolated.”

The two women at the center of the storm had come to know each other in prison. One of them was Fariba Kamalabadi, one of seven imprisoned national-level Bahá’í leaders. She was out for the first time in eight years for a five-day furlough.

The other was Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who had been imprisoned herself for protesting the 2009 presidential election results.

Mrs. Hashemi came on 13 May 2016 to Mrs. Kamalabadi’s home in Tehran to show support. During the meeting, a number of photographs were taken – and some of these were posted to social media.

Within days, government officials and religious

leaders vehemently denounced the meeting, and their remarks were carried in literally thousands of articles and broadcasts carried in state-run and state-endorsed media. [See opposite page.]



Above: The meeting of Faezeh Hashemi, in black chador, and Fariba Kamalabadi, next to her on the right, stirred a storm of denunciation against Bahá’ís in government media.

Below: Protesters in Rafsanjan sign a petition denouncing the meeting as treasonous, part of the government’s anti-Bahá’í campaign.



Anti-Bahá'í statements published in Iran's media

Statements issued shortly after the Kamalabadi-Hashemi meeting:

"When false actions are not prevented, some people allow themselves to encourage Bahaism. These actions have to be dealt with, as this is treason against the public and the martyrs, and anyone who befriends Bahaism is a Bahá'í, himself." – General Muhammad-Reza Naqdi, the head of the Basij Foundation for the needy, 16 May 2016, Basij Press

"The question should be asked, what the House of Justice, or the command headquarters of Bahaism is doing in Israel, and whether collaboration with such a network is a threat to the national security of our country." – Ayatollah Sadeq Amuli Larijani, 16 May 2016, Fars News

"The long standing colonialism of England created three fraudulent sects among the Muslims: Bahaism among the Shi'ites, Wahhabism among the Sunnis, and Zionism in the land of Palestine and the Middle East region, so that, with this endeavor, they can create enmity and separation among Muslims, and insecurity in the region." – Secretary General of the Expediency Council, 17 May 2016, Mashregh News

"Bahaism is neither a group nor a sect; rather, they are spies of Zionism, and have no other purpose for their mission except to spy for the Zionists, for which they gather together. Bahaism does not even believe in the principles of their religion, and, I believe, the only reason for their emergence is espionage for Zionism, the United States and Britain." – Ayatollah Hassan Mamdui, a member of the Assembly of Experts, 21 May 2016, Tasnim News

Other recent anti-Bahá'í statements in the media:

"While there are a number of Jews in the city, they are different from Bahá'ís. Bahá'ís are unclean, according to official rulings (fatwas)." – Imam Jom'eh, the Friday prayer leader of Rafsanjan, quoted in a 2014 article by Fars News.

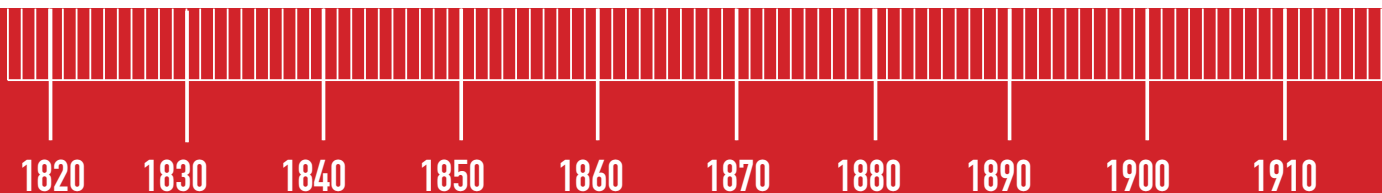
"The usurper Israel deepened its penetration into Iran through the deviant sect of Bahaism. Bahaism was the liaison between the Shah and Israel and had widespread influence in Iran before the Revolution." – Attributed to Hojjatoleslam Jadeed Benab in a 10 March 2010 article by Rasa News.

"Any association with them is to be avoided, unless there is the hope of guiding them [back to Islam]." – From a 2010 article on the Alef website offering the views of religious leaders generally about Bahá'ís, offering guidance about dealing with them, such as whether to patronize their shops.

"While Bahaism is currently trying to change its wicked profile... we should enlighten youth regarding the satanic goals of the enemies of Islam." – Attributed to Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Kamalvand, identified as a professor at a Tabriz seminary and university, in a 17 December 2009 article by Rasa News, a conservative news agency operated by clerics in Qom.

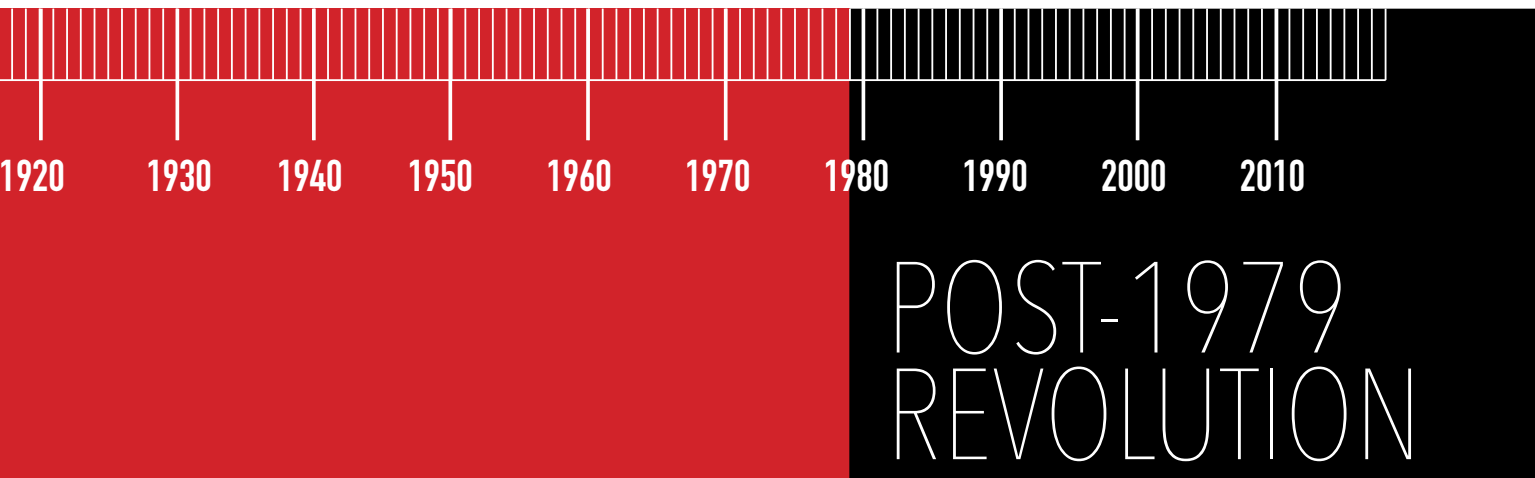
12 November 1817	Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, in Tehran.
20 October 1819	Birth of the Báb, the Herald of the Bahá'í Faith, in Shiraz.
23 May 1844	The Báb announces His mission as the Prophet-Herald of a new religion.
9 July 1850	The Báb is executed by firing squad in Tabriz. An estimated 20,000 followers were also killed.
August 1853	Bahá'u'lláh is imprisoned for four months, and then exiled to Baghdad.
April 1863	Bahá'u'lláh proclaims He is the bearer of a new Revelation from God.
31 August 1868	Bahá'u'lláh and his family are incarcerated in the prison city of Akka, in what was then Palestine.
29 May 1892	Bahá'u'lláh passes away while staying at Bahji, outside Akka.
June 1903	More than 100 Bahá'ís killed by mobs in uprising against them in Yazd, one of many such outbreaks.
1920s	Bahá'í schools flourish, enrolling an estimated 10 percent of schoolchildren in Iran.
December 1934	The Shah orders the closure of Bahá'í schools in Iran.
May 1944	Anti-Bahá'í agitation leads a mob of some 4,000 people to loot and destroy a Bahá'í center in Abadih.
May 1955	Bahá'ís around the country are attacked after the government allows a Tehran-based cleric to broadcast anti-Bahá'í propaganda on national radio.
December 1978	At least five Bahá'ís are killed in mob violence as revolutionary fervor sweeps the country.

TIMELINE



PRE-1979

1 February 1979	Ayatollah Khomeini returns from exile to Iran.
1 April 1979	Iran votes by national referendum to become an Islamic Republic.
9 September 1979	The House of the Báb, one of the most holy sites in the Bahá'í world, is demolished.
21 August 1980	All nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly (NSA), the elected national governing council for Iran's Bahá'ís, are abducted and killed.
10 September 1980	The Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expresses "profound concern" over the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran, the first such resolution by a UN body.
7 December 1981	Expulsion of all Bahá'ís from government positions becomes official policy.
13 December 1981	Eight of the nine new NSA members are arrested and executed two weeks later.
18 June 1983	Ten Bahá'í women in Shiraz are hanged for teaching religious classes to Bahá'í children.
29 August 1983	The government announces a ban on all Bahá'í administrative and community activities.
13 December 1985	UN General Assembly passes resolution expressing "deep concern" over Iran's violation of human rights, specifically mentioning Bahá'ís, the first in a series of 28 such expressions of concern by the Assembly through 2015.
1987	The Bahá'í community of Iran establishes the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) as an ad hoc effort to educate Bahá'í youth excluded from university.
25 July 1989	Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani becomes president of Iran.
25 February 1991	The "Bahá'í Question" memorandum signed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. It outlines a plan to block the economic, educational, and social development of the Bahá'í community.
3 August 1997	Mohammad Khatami assumes the office of President of Iran.
29 September 1998	Authorities begin a series of raids on some 500 Bahá'í homes, confiscating books and materials, and arresting 36 faculty and staff of the BIHE, in an attempt to shut it down.
3 August 2005	Mahmoud Ahmadinejad becomes president of Iran. Soon after, the arrest and imprisonment of Bahá'ís begins to climb, as do other acts of violence.
June 2004	Authorities demolish an historic house in Tehran that had been designed and owned by Mirza Abbas Nuri, the father of Bahá'u'lláh.
29 October 2005	Letter issued by Iranian military headquarters instructing police nationwide to identify and monitor Bahá'ís.
2006	Letter from Ministry of Science, Research and Technology instructs 81 Iranian universities to expel any student discovered to be a Bahá'í.
19 May 2006	54 young Bahá'ís are arrested for providing literacy and other classes to poor children in and around Shiraz.
5 March 2008	Mahvash Sabet, a member of the ad hoc national Bahá'í leadership known as The Friends, is arrested in Mashhad.
14 May 2008	Six other members of the Friends national leaderships group are arrested. They are Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rezaie, Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Vahid Tizfahm.
14 June 2010	End of three-day trial of the seven imprisoned Bahá'í leaders, who were then sentenced to 20 years in prison.
21 May 2011	More than a dozen educators and staff of the BIHE are arrested. Ultimately, 17 will be swept up and sent to prison for simply trying to educate Bahá'í youth.
4 August 2013	Hassan Rouhani assumes the office of president of Iran, promising an end to religious intolerance, a promise that remains unfulfilled.
25 October 2014	Some 80 Bahá'í-owned shops are closed by authorities in Kerman, Rafsanjan, and Jiroft, one of the largest incidents in an ongoing campaign against small shopkeepers.
May 2016	A meeting between imprisoned Bahá'í leader Fariba Kamalabadi and Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of former President Rafsanjani, stirs a storm of anti-Bahá'í rhetoric.



Iran's obligations under international law

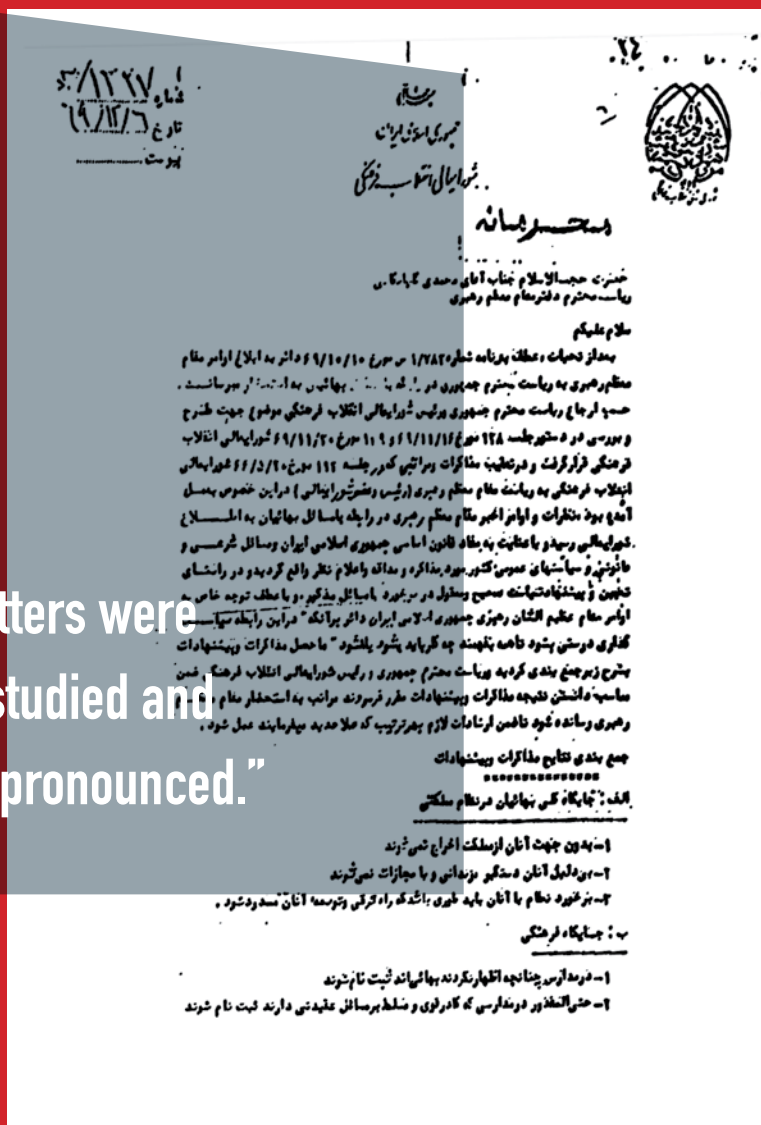


In 1968, the same year it signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Iran hosted the first International Conference on Human Rights held under the auspices of the UN. (UN Photo)

The Iranian government has a manifest obligation under international law to protect its citizens from discrimination and persecution, and to prosecute those who break the law. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a signatory, clearly defines these obligations:

- Non-discrimination. The ICCPR spells out the obligation to “respect and ensure all individuals in its territory” receive all rights agreed to in the ICCPR “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” [Article 2]
- Protection from murder. The ICCPR guarantees the “inherent right to life,” which shall be “protected by law.” “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.” [Article 6]
- Freedom from torture or degrading treatment. “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” [Article 7]
- Protection from arbitrary arrest. The ICCPR says “Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.” [Article 9]
- Guarantees of due process. “Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest...” and they “shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law...” [Article 9]
- The right to a fair trial. This includes that “all persons shall be equal before the courts,” that they “have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defence and to communicate with counsel of his own choosing,” “not to be compelled to testify against himself,” and that they be “tried without undue delay.” [Article 14]
- Freedom of religion. The ICCPR states that “[e]veryone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.” [Article 18]
- Non-coercion in matters of religion. Freedom of religion includes that “[n]o one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.” [Article 18]
- Protection from incitement. The ICCPR also imposes an affirmative obligation on the government to ensure that “[a]ny advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.” [Article 20]
- Protection for minorities. Religious minorities “shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group...to profess and practice their own religion.” [Article 27]

“these matters were
carefully studied and
decisions pronounced.”



ROOTS OF THE PERSECUTION

Roots of the persecution

Why does Iran persist in its oppression of Bahá'ís?

Since the founding of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran in 1844, the religious establishment there has responded with fierce opposition, even inciting violence against followers of the new religion. In their view, the Bahá'í Faith represents a complete heresy. Certainly, its progressive principles, which advocate equality for women, the scientific method, and the independent investigation of truth, directly threaten their worldview. But more than that, the very idea that there could be a divine religion after Islam is anathema, leading to their characterization of the Faith as an illicit political movement, deserving of eradication.

To understand the animosity directed by Iran's religious leaders towards Bahá'ís, one must start with the history of the Bahá'í Faith — and grasp the fact that it began with the proclamation that God had sent to humanity a new Messenger, delivering a new Revelation.

This idea itself — that there could be a new divine religion — runs counter to the understanding of many Shiite Muslim leaders, who believe that Islam is God's "final" religion and its full flowering will come when the Twelfth Imam emerges from hiding (or occultation) to uphold the basic principles outlined by Muhammad in the Quran.

Bahá'ís believe this promised unveiling has already occurred. The initial message of the Bahá'í Faith was delivered by a 25-year-old merchant from Shiraz, who took the title "the Báb," which means "gate" or "door" in Arabic. And on 23 May 1844, He proclaimed to a young seeker that He was the Promised One, as prophesied in the sacred scriptures of Islam. News of this bold proclamation soon spread throughout Iran, attracting thousands of followers.

But the teachings of the Báb went far beyond what many Shiites expected. The Báb began to reveal new scriptures, supplanting the Quran, and He advocated new rights for women.

Unsurprisingly, then, these new ideas — and their vast appeal to the populace — were seen by Iran's religious establishment as a threat to their power and authority. Thousands of early Bábis were killed at the urging of religious leaders, and the Báb was executed by the government in 1850.

The Báb was succeeded by an Iranian nobleman known as Bahá'u'lláh, who expanded on these progressive teachings. His main message was that there is only one God, that all of the world's religions are expressions of the Creator's will, and that humanity is a single race. The time has come, He said, for humanity to unite and create an “ever-advancing civilization.”

The Iranian religious orthodoxy responded with a renewed determination to extinguish the new religion and force its followers back to Islam. Bahá'u'lláh was exiled, sent to the prison city of Akka in what was then Ottoman Palestine, while His followers in Iran continued to face successive outbreaks of persecution. In 1903, for example, 101 Bahá'ís were killed in the city of Yazd after the populace was incited by hostile mullahs.

These eruptions often coincided with the need of various governments to shore up support from elements of Iran's Islamic leadership.

In the 1930s, the government of Reza Shah demanded that the Bahá'í schools only close on government-specified holidays. Bahá'í communities, required by the principles of their Faith to also close on Bahá'í holy days, refused to comply. In response, government officials closed down all Bahá'í-run schools in the country, which at the time numbered more than 50 and enrolled thousands of students.



Funeral of Hashim Farnush, arrested 5 November 1980, executed 23 June 1981. His wife is shown at his graveside in Tehran.

In 1955, the Pahlavi regime allowed the nationwide broadcast of a series of incendiary sermons against the Bahá'ís by a leading Shiite preacher in Tehran, Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Falsafi, apparently hoping to make the Bahá'ís a scapegoat to deflect attention from unpopular government policies. Sheikh Falsafi was joined by the Shah's Minister of Defense in demolishing the dome of the Bahá'í national headquarters with pickaxes. A wave of anti-Bahá'í violence swept the country — coming to an end only after an international outcry. [See page 67]

The 1979 Revolution

With the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, the attacks on Bahá'ís reached a new level: that of official government policy. Whereas attacks in the past had typically been spasmodic, and the government's support for them had been based on political expediency, the clerics who came to power during the Iranian revolution

brought with them a deep and abiding prejudice against Bahá'ís.

Even before Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile to assume power in February of that year, an increase in attacks on Bahá'ís presaged the wholesale persecution that was to come. In 1978, at least seven Bahá'ís were killed, most as a result of mob violence.

When the Republic's new constitution was drawn up in April 1979, certain rights of the Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian minorities in Iran were specifically mentioned and protected. However, no mention whatsoever was made of the rights of the Bahá'í community, Iran's largest religious minority.

Under Iran's concept of an Islamic government, this exclusion has come to mean that Bahá'ís enjoy no rights of any sort and that they can be attacked and persecuted with impunity. Courts in the Republic have denied Bahá'ís the right of redress or protection against assault, killings or other forms of persecution — and have ruled that Iranian citizens who kill or injure Bahá'ís are not liable for damages because their victims are “unprotected infidels.”

Without any claim to civil rights, the Bahá'í com-

munity saw rapid deterioration of its position within Iranian society. The House of the Báb, the holiest Bahá'í shrine in Iran, was destroyed in September 1979. [See page 46] Then a November 1979 edict from the Ministry of Education required not only the dismissal of all Bahá'í teachers but also held them responsible for the repayment of all salaries they had previously received.

At least seven Bahá'ís were killed in 1979. Two were executed by the government and one was hanged in prison. Others were beaten to death or killed in local incidents.

The government then began to systematically imprison and execute the elected and appointed leadership of the Iranian Bahá'í community.

On 21 August 1980, all nine members of the national Bahá'í governing council, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran, were abducted and disappeared without a trace. It seems certain that they were executed. In all that year, at least 24 Bahá'ís were killed. Twenty were executed by the government and the rest were stoned, assassinated or burned to death.

In 1981, at least 48 Bahá'ís were killed in Iran. That number included the so-called “second” national

spiritual assembly, which had reconstituted to replace the first. Eight of its members were executed on 27 December 1981.

At least 32 Bahá'ís were executed or killed in 1982, 29 in 1983, and 30 in 1984. Again, the targets of these executions were often members of Bahá'í governing councils. Four members of the “third” National Spiritual Assembly, which had once again been courageously re-established, were executed in 1984, even though by then the institution had been disbanded in accordance with a government decree and the individuals held no official position in the Bahá'í community.

One of the most dramatic episodes came in June 1983, when ten Iranian Bahá'í women, including two teenage girls, were hanged. The primary charge against them: teaching Bahá'í children's classes. [See page 66]

The women were subjected to intense physical and mental abuse in an effort to coerce them to recant their Faith — an option that was almost always pressed upon Bahá'í prisoners. Yet, like most Bahá'ís who have been arrested in Iran, they refused to deny their beliefs. Nevertheless, the fact that so many Bahá'ís were given the option of recanting, with the promise of release if they did so, is among the strongest proofs that

One of the most dramatic episodes came in June 1983, when ten Iranian Bahá'í women, including two teenage girls, were hanged. The primary charge against them: teaching Bahá'í children's classes.

the persecutions were based solely on religious beliefs.

As these and other horrors were made known to the world, an outcry against the persecution arose in the international news media, at the United Nations, and among governments and human rights organizations.

In response, Iran stopped its wholesale execution of Bahá'ís and reduced the number of Bahá'ís in prison. Instead, as evidenced by the 1991 Bahá'í Question memorandum, it refocused its policies towards economic, educational, and cultural restrictions aimed at blocking the development of the Bahá'í community — an effort that continues today.

Hanged for teaching Sunday School

Few incidents are more shocking – or revealing of the religious basis of the persecution against Bahá'ís and the courage with which they face it – than the group hanging of ten Bahá'í women in Shiraz on 18 June 1983.

Their crime: teaching religious classes to Bahá'í youth – the equivalent of being “Sunday school” teachers in the West.

Ranging in age from 17 to 57, the ten Bahá'í women were led to the gallows in succession. Authorities apparently hoped that as each saw the others slowly strangle to death, they would renounce their own faith.

But according to eyewitness reports, the women went to their fate singing and chanting, as though they were enjoying a pleasant outing.

One of the men attending the gallows confided to a Bahá'í: “We tried saving their lives up to the last moment, but one by one, first the older ladies, then the young girls, were hanged while the others were forced to watch, it being hoped that this might induce them to recant their belief. We even urged them to say they were not Bahá'ís, but not one of them agreed; they preferred the execution.”

All of the women had been interrogated and tortured in the months leading up to their execution. Indeed, some had wounds still visible on their bodies as they lay in the morgue after their execution.

The youngest was Mona Mahmudnizhad, a 17-year-old schoolgirl who, because of her youth and conspicuous innocence, became a symbol of



the group. In prison, she was lashed on the soles of her feet with a cable and forced to walk on her bleeding feet.

Yet she never wavered in her faith, even to the point of kissing the hands of her executioner, and then the rope, before putting it around her own throat.

Another young woman, Zarrin Muqimi-Abyanih, 28, told the interrogators whose chief goal was to have her disavow her faith: “Whether you accept it or not, I am a Bahá'í. You cannot take it away from me. I am a Bahá'í with my whole being and my whole heart.”

During the trial of another of the women, Ruya Ishraqi, a 23-year-old veterinary student, the judge said: “You put yourselves through this agony only for one word: just say you are not a Bahá'í and I'll see that...you are released...” Ms. Ishraqi responded: “I will not exchange my faith for the whole world.”

The names of the other women hanged on 18 June 1983 were Shahin Dalvand, 25, a sociologist; Izzat Janami Ishraqi, 57, a homemaker; Mahshid Nirumand, 28, who had qualified for a degree in physics but had it denied her because she was a Bahá'í; Simin Sabiri, 25; Tahirih Arjumandi Siyavushi, 30, a nurse; Akhtar Thabit, 25, also a nurse; Nusrat Ghufrani Yalda'i, 47, a mother and member of the local Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly.

All had seen it as their duty to teach Bahá'í religious classes – especially since the government had barred Bahá'í children from attending even regular school.

An outbreak of hatred in the 1950s — and the international response

In 1955, during the month of Ramadan, the government chose to broadcast on national radio a series of hateful speeches by a cleric named Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Falsafi. He cried out against the Bahá'ís, accusing them of being enemies of Islam. Among other things, he said the Bahá'í Faith was a “false religion.”

His words stirred many listeners. On 17 May, the Minister of the Interior announced that orders had been issued for the suppression of the “Bahá'í sect.” And there soon followed an orgy of murder, rape, pillage and destruction waged against Bahá'ís around the country.

Bahá'í holy places were desecrated, Bahá'í-owned shops and farms were plundered, the bodies of Bahá'ís were disinterred from cemeteries and mutilated, private homes were broken into and looted, and young Bahá'í women were abducted and forced to marry Muslims.

Bahá'ís outside the country mounted a campaign at the United Nations and in the international news media in an effort to appeal to the Shah and his government to halt these attacks and bring a measure of justice. Gradually, order was restored and seized properties and holy places were returned to the Bahá'í community.

The episode reflects a number of things about the history of the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran. First, it demonstrates the deep animosity that some members of Iran's clerical class hold against Bahá'ís. And it shows the degree to which government, when so predisposed, can either give in to that hatred or restrain it. Finally, it indicates the degree to which international monitoring and pressure are critical in assuring the protection of Iranian Bahá'ís.



In 1955, Muslim leaders and members of the Shah's army destroyed the national Bahá'í Center in Tehran.



The Bahá'í House of Worship in Santiago, Chile

The Bahá'í Faith: A global community

Founded in 1844 in Iran, the Bahá'í Faith is today among the fastest-growing of the world's religions. With more than five million followers, who reside in virtually every nation on earth, it is the second-most widespread independent world religion, surpassing every faith but Christianity in its geographic reach. Bahá'ís reside in more than 100,000 localities around the world, an expansion that reflects their dedication to the ideal of world citizenship.

The Bahá'í Faith's global scope is mirrored in the composition of its membership. Representing a cross section of humanity, Bahá'ís come from virtually every nation, ethnic group, culture, profession, and social or economic class. More than 2,100 different ethnic and tribal groups are represented.

The Faith's Founder is Bahá'u'lláh, a Persian nobleman from Tehran who, in the mid-nineteenth century, left a life of princely comfort and security and, in the face of intense persecution and deprivation, brought to humanity a stirring new message of peace and unity.

Bahá'u'lláh claimed to be nothing less than a new and independent Messenger from God. His life, work, and influence parallel that of Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, and Muhammad. Bahá'ís view Bahá'u'lláh as the most recent in this succession of divine Messengers.

The essential message of Bahá'u'lláh is that of unity. He taught that there is only one God, that there is only one human race, and that each of the world's religions represent stages in the revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. In this day, Bahá'u'lláh said, humanity has collectively come of age. As foretold in all of the world's scriptures, the time has arrived for the uniting of all peoples into a peaceful and integrated global society. "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens," He wrote.

For a global society to flourish, Bahá'u'lláh said, it must be based on certain fundamental principles. They include the elimination of all forms of prejudice; full equality between the sexes; recognition of the essential oneness of the world's great religions; the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth; universal education; the harmony of science and religion; a sustainable balance between nature and technology; and the establishment of a world federal system, based on collective security and the oneness of humanity.

Around the world today, Bahá'ís seek to contribute to the betterment of the world through social and economic development projects, efforts at community building that include devotional meetings for all religions, programs of moral education for children and young people, and study circles aimed at the empowerment of adults. They also seek to contribute to the generation of new ideas and practical solutions to the global challenges facing humanity by standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other people who are actively participating in such endeavors.

The Bahá'í Faith is established in virtually every country in the world, and its followers come from every ethnic, national, racial, and religious background. Shown below is the 2016 National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Kazakhstan, the elected governing body that guides the affairs of Bahá'ís in virtually every country — except Iran, where such councils are banned.



“their progress and
development are blocked”

RESPONSES TO PERSECUTION

Responses to the persecution

At every turn during the nearly four decades of systematic persecution against Bahá'ís in Iran, the international response and outcry has been critical in preventing an escalation of violence.

Expressions of concern for the Bahá'ís of Iran have come not only from the United Nations and its various human rights bodies but also from assorted governments, parliaments, and intergovernmental bodies — as well as from the international news media and non-governmental human rights organizations.

The outcry against Iran's treatment of Bahá'ís began in the early 1980s as the killings, imprisonment, and torture of Bahá'ís became known. The first register of concern at the UN came in 1980, when the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities expressed “profound concern” for the safety of Iranian Bahá'ís.

Such expressions quickly moved up the UN hierarchy to the General Assembly, which since 1985 has passed 28 resolutions expressing concern about human rights violations in Iran that have made specific mention of the situation facing Iranian Bahá'ís. And before it was replaced by the

Human Rights Council, the UN Commission on Human Rights likewise passed more than 20 resolutions that also explicitly mentioned the persecution of Bahá'ís.

Such references to a specific religious community were at first unusual, since the UN had traditionally confined itself to expressions of diplomatic concern and general references to charges of human rights violations and discrimination.

Resolutions at the United Nations expressing concern over Iran's human rights violations have been important in protecting Iranian Bahá'ís.
(UN Photo/Andrea Brizzi)





In May 2014, influential Iranians, human rights activists, journalists and a prominent religious leader gathered in Tehran at the home of one of the seven imprisoned Bahá'í leaders to commemorate the sixth anniversary of their arrest. The gathering, an unprecedented show of solidarity, reflects the ever more vocal call inside Iran for an end to the government's persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís.

It is also significant that virtually all of these resolutions have called on Iran to abide by the various international covenants on human rights that the government had freely signed. UN resolutions have also called explicitly for the “emancipation” of the Bahá'ís of Iran.

Moreover, UN bodies have over the years appointed a number of special investigators — known as “special rapporteurs” — to monitor and report on human rights concerns in Iran and elsewhere. The reports of these special rapporteurs have consistently refuted Iran's denials and confirmed that the oppression of Bahá'ís is extensive, systematic, and based on religious persecution.

In addition to efforts by the United Nations and its

subsidiary bodies and agencies, numerous national legislatures and regional bodies have spoken out against Iran's treatment of the Bahá'í community. Expressions of concern for Iran's Bahá'ís have come from the European Council, the European Parliament, and from the legislatures of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, among others. Many heads of state and government have also voiced their dismay over Iran's treatment of the Bahá'ís.

International and national non-governmental organizations have also risen to the defense of Iran's Bahá'ís. Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and Human Rights Watch, among other international human rights organizations,

have compiled extensive reports on and called for action to stop the persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís. At the national level, a number of prominent groups and individuals have also condemned Iran's persecution of Bahá'ís. In 2016, such expressions of concern were voiced by individuals and groups ranging from a dozen lawyers in Bangladesh to Ghaleb Bencheikh, a highly respected Muslim theologian in France.

Iranian human rights activists and leaders, including Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, journalist Akbar Ganji, and student leader Ahmad Batebi, have also in recent years expressed concern about the treatment of Bahá'ís.

More recently, activists inside Iran have also begun, at great personal risk, to speak out in support of “Bahá'í rights.” These have included

Nasrin Sotoudeh, a human rights lawyer; Narges Mohammadi, a prominent women's rights activist; Mohammad Nourizad, a journalist and filmmaker; Muhammad Maleki, the first head of Tehran University following the Islamic Revolution; Masumeh Dehghan, an activist; the wife of Abdolfatah Soltani, a well-known lawyer who represented the seven and who is himself currently in prison; and Jila Baniyaghoob and Issa Saharkhiz, two prominent journalists who were previously in prison. And in May 2016, five prominent Iranian religious scholars — Abdolali Bazargan, Hasan Fereshtian, Mohsen Kadivar, Sedigheh Vasmaghi and Hasan Yousefi-Eshkevari — published a statement saying that the “followers of the Bahá'í religion have been oppressed because of their religion and beliefs for decades.”

The “Education is not a crime” campaign has been using street art to call attention to the exclusion of Bahá'ís from higher education in Iran. Shown is a mural in Harlem, New York. Other cities where artists have participated include Delhi, Johannesburg, London, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and Sydney.



Iran's inadequate response to the Universal Periodic Review

The creation of the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council in 2005 was supposed to provide an objective review of human rights practices for every country in the world on an equal basis.

In its two reviews under the mechanism so far, in 2010 and 2014, Iran has almost entirely ignored the questions and comments of other nations regarding its treatment of Bahá'ís – and failed to implement the few recommendations it accepted.

In 2010, at least 21 nations made specific mention of the situation of Iranian Bahá'ís. Many issued a broad call for an end to religious discrimination against Bahá'ís and other minorities, while others expressed specific concern for the detention of the seven Bahá'í leaders.

Iran made a number of promises to respect religious freedom and improve its treatment of Iranian Bahá'ís in response. An analysis undertaken by the Bahá'í International Community in 2014 found, however, that Iran had implemented none of these.¹

For example, Iran accepted a recommendation from Luxembourg that it should “fully respect the rights of the adherents of the Bahá'í faith and to judicially prosecute those inciting hatred against them in

¹ “Unfulfilled Promises: Iran's failure to act after its 2010 Universal Periodic Review,” A special report of the Bahá'í International Community, September 2014.



The Iran delegation, headed by Mohammad Javid Larijani, in gray suit, at the Human Rights Council on 31 October 2014, responding to questions from other governments during Iran's Universal Periodic Review.

religious environments, the media and the Internet.” As the rising statistics on the number of items of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in the media since then prove, Iran has completely reneged on this promise.

In all, the analysis found, Iran failed to implement any of the 34 recommendations it accepted in 2010 that concern human rights violations affecting Bahá'ís, including not only those about religious freedom but also regarding issues like due process and access to higher education.

At Iran's Universal Periodic Review in 2014, numerous countries again called on Iran to respect the rights of Bahá'ís. In response, Iran accepted only two out of 10 recommendations concerning its treatment of Bahá'ís, making clear that it has no intention of heeding the international community's call for change.

Many of these activists became friends with Bahá'ís while in prison, as was the case of Faezeh Hashemi, whose bold meeting with Fariba Kamalabadi stirred a storm of anti-Bahá'í propaganda. [See page 56] They came to see that they were not the demons described in anti-Bahá'í propaganda but rather compassionate human beings who desire not only the freedom to worship as they choose but also to be enabled to participate in the work of creating a better future for Iran.

The world's news media have long reported on the persecution of Iran's Bahá'í community. Major articles and editorials that detail, confirm and condemn the persecutions have appeared in *Le Monde*, the *Times of London*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Times of India*, along with regional newspapers such as *Folha de Sao Paulo* in Brazil, *Today's Zaman* in Ankara, Turkey, and the *Tribune* in Chandigarh, India. The major wire services, such as the Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Deutsche Presse-Agentur, and Reuters, have also carried numerous dispatches on the persecution, as have international radio and television networks, such as Al Jazeera, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), CNN, and the Voice of America.

Moreover, a number of prominent Iranian journalists and commentators, both inside and outside Iran, have recently written articles in defense of their Bahá'í countrymen. They include Faraj Sarkouhi, Ahmad Zeidabadi, and Olof Palme prize winner Parvin Ardalan, along with famous blogger Arash Sigarchi. "We are all Iranian Bahá'ís," wrote Ali Keshtgar, a prominent



Nobel laureate and Iranian human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi has spoken out frequently in defense of Iran's Bahá'ís. (UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe)

Iranian thinker, in August 2008.

In many respects, the Bahá'í case has been a model for how the international human rights machinery, combined with support from civil society advocates and accurate coverage from the news media, can be used to protect an oppressed minority. Thanks to international support for the Bahá'ís, along with growing support inside Iran and among Iranian expatriates, the wholesale annihilation of the Bahá'í community in Iran has so far been prevented.

A senior cleric calls for “religious coexistence” with Bahá’ís

Among the most notable recent expressions of support for Bahá’ís from inside Iran came in the form of an illuminated calligraphic manuscript featuring a quote from the Bahá’í writings, produced by a prominent Muslim cleric and sent as a gift to the Bahá’í world in 2014.

Ayatollah Abdol-Hamid Masoumi-Tehrani explained on his website that the calligraphic work was meant to serve as a “reminder of the importance of valuing human beings, of peaceful coexistence, of cooperation and mutual support, and avoidance of hatred, enmity and blind religious prejudice.”

In 2015, Ayatollah Masoumi-Tehrani produced another work of calligraphy featuring a different passage from the Bahá’í writings, saying he hopes his act will “raise the conscience of my fellow countrymen by considering increasing their respect for human dignity and not focusing their attention on different ethnicities, languages and religions.”

Ayatollah Abdol-Hamid Masoumi-Tehrani perfecting an illuminated work of calligraphy. The words used in this piece are from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.



We are Ashamed!

In 2009, a group of prominent Iranian academics, writers, journalists, artists and activists outside the country drafted and signed an open letter proclaiming their disgust at the mistreatment of Bahá'ís over the years in their homeland.

"As Iranian human beings, we are ashamed for what has been perpetrated upon the Bahá'ís in the last century and a half in Iran," said the letter, which was ultimately signed by 267 individuals.

"We firmly believe that every Iranian, 'without distinction of any kind, such as, race, color, sex, language, religion, politics or other opinions,' and also without regard to ethnic background, 'social origin, property, birth or other status,' is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the

**"We will no longer be
silent when injustice
is visited upon you."**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, from the very inception of the Bahá'í Faith, the followers of this religion in Iran have been deprived of many provisions of human rights solely on account of their religious convictions."

The letter ended by asking Bahá'ís to forgive them, collectively, for the wrongs committed against the Bahá'í community. "We will no longer be silent when injustice is visited upon you," they said.



In 2015, on the seventh anniversary of the arrest and imprisonment of the seven Iranian Bahá'í leaders [see page 20], Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh bravely recorded a video message calling for their release. "Their sentences are unjust," she said. "It is definitely due to their particular beliefs that they are held in prison." Ms. Sotoudeh was herself imprisoned and for a time shared a cell with two of the Bahá'í leaders. She was released in 2013, shortly before Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's visit to the UN that year.

“Deny them any position
of influence...”



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Community Resilience

Iranian Bahá'ís have responded not with anger or violence, but with constructive resilience.

Despite nearly four decades of persecution, during which they have seen their leadership decimated, their friends and relatives imprisoned, their holy sites and cemeteries confiscated, their economic fortunes dashed, and their young people blocked from education, Bahá'ís have responded not with violence and outrage, but with efforts at community building and, even, social and economic development projects aimed at helping their fellow Iranian citizens.

The Bahá'ís of Yazd are on their third cemetery. The first, which featured a beautiful tree-lined garden in the city's central area, was confiscated and then destroyed in 1979.

Another piece of land was then given to the Bahá'ís in a desert area outside of the city. Despite its remote location, the Bahá'ís worked hard to make it attractive by planting trees.

In 2007, many of those trees and numerous gravestones were bulldozed, and later, an earth embankment was constructed to prevent Bahá'ís from using it.

In 2013, a third piece of land was allocated to the Bahá'ís, which was also located in the middle of

the desert, situated between two sandy hills and with no access road save through a garbage dump. The Bahá'ís have nevertheless begun to beautify this third plot of land, and in June 2015, a funeral for one of the Bahá'ís of Yazd was held there.

The story tells much about the resilience of the Iranian Bahá'í community, who have responded not with violence and outrage to their oppression but with “constructive resilience,” to cite a phrase brought into the public discourse by scholar Michael Karlberg.

The Bahá'í community of Iran, writes Dr. Karlberg, “has pursued a distinctively non-adversarial approach to social change under conditions of violent



Above: The second Yazd cemetery. This remote site was provided after the original cemetery had been attacked and closed to further burials. The photo also shows earth embankments erected to prevent its use.

Right: The original Bahá'í cemetery in Yazd was located within the city's urban core. This photo was taken in 1979, after its destruction by elements of the government.



oppression.” This approach, he writes, is based on the idea that “strategies for achieving lasting social change — including strategies for overcoming violent oppression — must pay attention to both the material and spiritual dimensions of change, including the transformation of hearts among both the oppressors and the oppressed.

“In this regard, oppositional strategies that pit one group against another, whether violently or non-violently, are not considered conducive to spiritual transformation and lasting change. Bahá'ís thus refrain from all divisive forms of social action, including involvement in partisan political organizing and opposition.”¹

The foremost example of this kind of constructive response, writes Dr. Karlberg, was the creation of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, an ad hoc, alternative university set up by Bahá'ís to provide young people with higher learning. [See page 34]

¹ “Constructive Resilience: The Bahá'í Response to Oppression,” by Michael Karlberg, *Peace & Change*, Vol. 35, No. 2, April 2010, pp 222-257.

Bahá'ís have also demonstrated constructive resilience by bravely approaching officials with carefully worded complaints about specific acts of oppression, even if they have little hope of gaining a sympathetic ear. Likewise, Bahá'ís have repeatedly sought to work through Iran's court system to resolve problems such as the confiscation of property, the closing of a business, or the denial of education.

In the village of Ivel, for example, Bahá'í farmers whose homes have been burned or demolished continue to plant crops on their land, even though it is economically disadvantageous, just to show that the efforts of those acting against them have been unsuccessful.



In 2013, a site for the third Yazd cemetery was provided even further from the town in the barren desert after the second cemetery was blocked off.

Working for the betterment of Iran

Despite their persecution, Iranian Bahá'ís have also sought within their limited means to assist in the development of their society. Such efforts have included small social and economic development projects aimed at improving literacy or addressing other social problems. Despite the laudable nature of such efforts, the government has often moved to suppress them, apparently fearful of anything that might cast Bahá'ís in a good light.

Examples include:

- Efforts by a group of young Bahá'ís in Shiraz in the early 2000s to provide tutoring in literacy for disadvantaged youth in poor neighborhoods in that city. For their work, however, 54 individuals were arrested and detained. Three leaders of the group were sentenced to four years of imprisonment. [See page 84]
- Efforts by a group of Bahá'ís to provide kindergarten-level education for young chil-

dren in the aftermath of an earthquake that destroyed much of the education system in 2003 in the city of Bam. For this work, at least four Bahá'ís were arrested in 2011. The government claimed that Bahá'ís “took advantage” of the need for cultural, social and educational measures following the earthquake to promote their own programs.

- Humanitarian assistance provided in August 2012 after an earthquake there in East Azerbaijan province. Once again, at least three Bahá'ís were arrested for their efforts to help their fellow Iranians. Other Bahá'ís were warned against providing such humanitarian assistance.

The Bahá'ís of Iran, like their co-religionists around the world, respond in this manner because they are seeking to build a new and peaceful world, where means and ends are always in coherence. Hence, they believe, any attempt to promote discord or division in pursuit of their own interests is unconscionable.

As one type of community service, Bahá'ís sometimes greet the families of prisoners with tea and sweets as they emerge from Evin Prison. They do this not only for the families of Bahá'í prisoners but the families of all prisoners.



With tears in his eyes, he gave sweets to Bahá'ís

Some prisoners at Gowhardasht prison are allowed family visits once a week. For Bahá'ís who have families in prison, it is an opportunity they diligently pursue.

One Wednesday in April 2016, family visitors were greeted by a man and his wife as they emerged from the prison compound. The pair was holding a box of sweets, greeting each and every Bahá'í as they came out.

The man's actions came at great risk to himself. He had been a prisoner at Gowhardasht just a week before, having served two years for "acting against national security" – a charge related to his work as a human rights defense lawyer.

But during his time in prison, Mohammad Seifzadeh had met many Bahá'ís and been affected by their kindness and conduct.

And so it was with tears of joy, according to eyewitnesses, that Dr. Seifzadeh and his wife greeted the exiting Bahá'ís.

And in reports to the UN, Iran has ludicrously compared the Bahá'í Faith to Nazism

In its official response to the March 2016 report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran to the Human Rights Council, Iran took the odd line of comparing the Bahá'í Faith to Nazism.

The response tells much about the real attitudes of Iranian officials towards the Bahá'í community.

According to Ahmed Shaheed, the Special Rapporteur, "On 16 October 2015, for example, the Deputy of the Parliament's National Security Commission, Mr. Haghighatpour, called the Bahá'í faith a wayward sect created by Britain, and

compared Bahá'ís to Wahabbis whom he said sought to increase tensions between Shias and Sunnis in the region." In a response to a query about that, Dr. Shaheed wrote, "the Government notes that '[g]iven the history of century-old cooperation between the Bahai sect and the Shah[']s regime and SAVAK, historical facts could not be overlooked as nobody can stop criticizing Nazism in Germany."

Unjustly imprisoned for helping underprivileged children

Many efforts by Iranian Bahá'ís to help their fellow citizens quite naturally operate out of the spotlight. But one project received international attention after participants were arrested *en masse* for trying to help children living in poverty.

In May 2006, 54 Bahá'ís and 10 Muslim collaborators were arrested in a dramatic sweep at six locations in and around Shiraz. While most were eventually released, three leaders of the effort were sentenced to prison terms of four years.

Haleh Rouhi, 29, Raha Sabet, 33, and Sasan Taqva, 32, were charged with “propaganda against the regime” for their effort at helping to initiate a social service project that sought to address low literacy rates and other problems facing poor children in and around the city.

In the beginning, members of the group met with the children every Friday morning for four hours. Project tutors – who included Muslim youth – would lay out rugs in front of the houses of the parents so that the families could see that their only intention was to serve the children and therefore be put at ease. The mothers would stand nearby to observe the lessons and exercises the tutors were delivering.

The group started working with 20 children, but the number quickly swelled to 120. At the end of the school term, the parents of the children asked whether the activities could continue. The group decided to extend their services to include assisting the children to acquire social and moral skills so that they themselves could become the agents of advancement in their own lives and society.

By summer 2005, the number of children involved in the program had increased so significantly that it was necessary to divide them into two groups, each group comprising more than 100 students and 30 tutors. Similar projects were soon launched in Sahlabad and Shiraz itself, each involving about 100 children.



A Bahá'í-sponsored literacy class for disadvantaged youth near Shiraz. For this effort, 54 were arrested.

The latter project was carried out within the ambit of the program “Protection of the Rights of Children” in Shiraz, which was registered with the Ministry of the Interior. The group also organized art classes for young cancer patients at a hospital in Shiraz and made regular visits to orphanages and facilities for physically and mentally challenged children.

These efforts continued for another year. Then, on 19 May 2006, tutors and project leaders in six locations were simultaneously arrested by the police. The Muslims and one Bahá'í were released immediately; the remaining 53 Bahá'ís were released over the course of the next few days and weeks. Ms. Rouhi, Ms. Sabet, and Mr. Taqva were held for nearly a month and later sent to prison, convicted of “offenses relating to state security.”



Haleh Rouhi, Sasan Taqva and Raha Sabet.

“they should be enrolled in schools which have a strong and imposing religious ideology.”

CONCLUSION

Conclusion: What can be done

The international community should insist on deeds instead of mere words from Iran.

History has shown that continued international pressure is the best – and perhaps the only – method of restraining Iran’s theocratic rulers from acting on their deeply held prejudice against Bahá’ís.

In his speech at the United Nations in September 2015, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani stated that “a new chapter has been started in Iran’s relations with the world.”

The international community has welcomed Iran’s new tone, but many have wondered how sincere its leaders are in their declaration of moderation and tolerance.

This is in part because of reports by UN officials and others that Iran continues to violate the rights of its citizens. And there is no better example of such ongoing violations than in Iran’s continued systematic oppression of its Bahá’í citizens, who form the country’s largest non-Muslim religious minority.

Despite denials by government officials, all of the evidence — from statistics about human rights violations to Iran’s own internal policy documents — shows that Iran has not given up

its broad scale, centrally led effort to “block the development” of the Iranian Bahá’í community.

As of this writing, 81 Bahá’ís are currently in prison for their religious beliefs. Hundreds more are out on bail or awaiting trial on fabricated charges such as “propaganda against the regime” — even though the government knows that the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith require its followers to refrain from partisan political activity, to eschew all violence, and to behave with obedience and respect towards the government.

Since President Rouhani came to power in August 2013, more than 151 Bahá’ís have been arrested, at least 388 Bahá’í-owned shops and businesses have faced threats, closure, or other forms of economic discrimination, and at least 28 young Bahá’ís have been expelled from universities, while hundreds more have been prevented from enrolling.

Moreover, the government's effort to incite hatred against Bahá'ís has not only continued but accelerated. Since 2014, government-controlled media have disseminated more than 20,000 items of anti-Bahá'í propaganda.

Despite this, the people of Iran increasingly reject the government's false allegations about Bahá'ís. Instead, Iranians of all religious backgrounds are standing up for the rights of Bahá'ís or taking other smaller, day-to-day actions — such as shopping at Bahá'í-owned stores or providing employment to Bahá'ís — demonstrating their solidarity and their expectation that the government should show religious tolerance.

All this amounts to a clear refutation of the government's claim that its measures against Bahá'ís are necessitated by the prejudices of Iranian citizens and the duty to keep public order.

The last three decades have proved that Iranian authorities are indeed cognizant of international opinion and that pressure to meet their obligations under international human rights law can have an effect.

Such was the case in 1955, when the Shah heeded entreaties by the UN to stop the rampage against Bahá'ís that followed hateful radio broadcasts. And in the 1980s, there is little doubt that international pressure by the UN, governments, and the media helped to curb the wholesale killing of Bahá'ís, leading the regime to shift its tactics to social, economic, and educational repression.

The case for continued international pressure, then, is clear. Iran's systematic persecution of Bahá'ís spans three generations, now affecting the children of children who were imprisoned or killed in the 1980s. The question remains: can the international community prevent its impact on another generation?

As for Iran itself, if its leaders are really set on opening a new chapter in its international relations, there is no better indicator of their sincerity than to bring a swift end to the decades-long persecution of its Bahá'í minority, who pose no threat to the government.

Concrete signs of such a move could include President Rouhani informing the world that the 1991 Bahá'í Question memorandum has been rescinded — and calling for an end to incitement of hatred against Bahá'ís. Another indicator would be to have Iranian diplomats realistically address the discrimination against their Bahá'í citizens, rather than denying that it occurs or refusing even to discuss the topic at all.

Bahá'ís desire no special privileges and have no political aspirations. They only wish to be free to worship as they choose and to contribute to the betterment of society in their native land.

APPENDIX

حضور ارجاع و ریاست محترم جمهوری
و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱/۱۳۵۷
قرعینگی قرار گرفت و در تعاقب مذاکرات
انعقاد فرعینگی به ریاست مقام محترم
آمد و بود و نظرات و ارایه اخیر مقام
جمهوری عالی رسید و با عنایت به مفاد قانون
مأموریت و سیاستهای عمومی کشور مورد
تجربین و پیشنهادت است صحیح و مستقر
ارایه مقام عظیم الشان رهبری جمهوری
گفاری در سخن پشود تا حد تفهیم چه
مشرع زیر جمع بندی کرده و ریاست محترم
مساحت داشتند نتیجه مذاکرات و پیشنهاد

Appendix I — Documents from Iran

The following documents, in the original Persian with a subsequent English translation, show conclusively that the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran is official government policy. Many of these documents were once secret but were later obtained and released by the United Nations or human rights organizations. Included are:

- The 1991 “Bahá'í Question” memorandum. Obtained and released in 1993 by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Iran, this confidential memorandum is endorsed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. It outlines the Islamic Republic’s plan to block the progress and development of Iranian Bahá'ís.
- A 29 October 2005 letter from Iranian military headquarters to police forces around the country calling for the identification and monitoring of Bahá'ís.
- A 2006 letter from Iran’s Ministry of Science, Research and Technology instructing 81 Iranian universities to expel any student who is discovered to be a Bahá'í.
- A 9 April 2007 letter to police commanders around Tehran that calls for tight restrictions on Bahá'í businesses.
- A 15 March 2009 letter from the Public Places Supervision Office of Kerman Province to Rafsanjan police commanders instructing them to restrict real estate purchases by Bahá'ís.
- A 30 August 2009 notice to a Bahá'í business in Semnan, cancelling the owner's business permit.
- A 23 June 2011 court ruling in Laljin acquitting a Muslim of the crime of usury because the plaintiff was a Bahá'í.
- A 7 August 2011 letter to the Iran Insurance Company from the Prosecutor’s Office of Arak, saying that signing contracts with a Bahá'í is legally prohibited.
- A 23 May 2011 letter from the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security stating the transfer of pension contributions is not permitted because the former employee is a Bahá'í.
- A 5 August 2007 letter from the national oil company to a Bahá'í saying that, “owing to your membership in the Bahaist sect,” his pension cannot be renewed.
- An 18 February 2010 letter from the Public Places Supervision Office to the head of the Association for Union Affairs, requesting information about Bahá'ís in Karaj.
- A 15 June 2009 letter from the Federation of Suppliers of Automobile Spare Parts to the director of Union Affairs in Karaj, asking that the activities of Bahá'ís be prevented.
- A list of fatwas and decrees issued by religious authorities concerning Bahá'ís and commerce.

Persian original of the 1991 "Bahá'í Question" memorandum outlining the Islamic Republic's plan to block the progress and development of Iranian Bahá'ís.

شماره ۱۳۲۷/۱
تاریخ ۱۹/۱۲/۹۱
پروت

جمهوری اسلامی ایران
شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی

مستحضرین

حضرت حجت الاسلام جناب آقای محمدی گیلانی
رئیس محترم دفتر مقام معظم رهبری

سلام علیکم

بمطابق ضوابط و عطف به نامه شماره ۱/۷۸۲/۱۰ مورخ ۹/۱۰/۱۰ و دائره ابراهیم مقام
معظم رهبری به ریاست محترم جمهوری در رابطه با نهادهای بهائیان در ایران و بهرسانست
حسب ارجاع ریاست محترم جمهوری رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی موضوع جهت صدور
و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۹۱ و ۱۱۹ مورخ ۹/۱۱/۹۱ شورای عالی انقلاب
فرهنگی قرار گرفت و در نتیجه مذاکرات وراثتی که در جلسه ۱۱۲ مورخ ۲۲/۵/۹۱ شورای عالی
انقلاب فرهنگی به ریاست مقام معظم رهبری (رئیس و سرشورای عالی) در این خصوص بعمل
آمده بود مذاکرات و اواخر اخیر مقام معظم رهبری در رابطه با مسائل بهائیان به اطلاع
شورای عالی رسید و با عنایت به مفاد قانون اساسی جمهوری اسلامی ایران و مسائل شرعی و
قانونی و سیاستهای عمومی کشور مورد مذاکره و مذاقه و اعلام نظر واقع گردید و در راستای
تجهیز و پیگیریهای مستقیم و مقبول در سربورد با مسائل مذکور و با عطف توجه خاص به
اواخر مقام معظم رهبران جمهوری اسلامی ایران دائره برآنکه "در این رابطه سیاست
گذاری دوستانه نباشد بلکه باید پیشرو باشد" ما حاصل مذاکرات و پیشنهادات
پیشتر زیر جمع بندی گردید و ریاست محترم جمهوری و رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی ضمن
مسابقه دانستن نتیجه مذاکرات و پیشنهادات مقرر فرمودند مراتب به استحضار مقام معظم
رهبری رسانده شود تا ضمن اternادات لازم به ترتیب که صلاح دید میسرمانند عمل شود.

جمع بندی نتایج مذاکرات و پیشنهادات

الف: جایگاه کلی بهائیان در نظام مملکتی

۱- بهرین جهت آنان از مملکت اخراج نمی شوند
۲- در دلیل آنان دستگیر و زندانی و با مجازات نمی شوند
۳- بهر ضرورت نظام با آنان باید مهربانی باشد که راه ترک و توسعه آنان تسهیل شود.

ب: جایگاه فرهنگی

۱- در مدارس چنانچه اظهار نگرند بهائیانند ثبت نام شوند
۲- حتی القذور در مدارس که کادر فنی و مسلط بر مسائل عقیدتی دارند ثبت نام شوند

[illegible]

English translation of the 1991 “Bahá’í Question” memorandum outlining the Islamic Republic’s plan to block the progress and development of Iranian Bahá’ís.

[TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Text in square brackets added by translator]

In the Name of God!

The Islamic Republic of Iran

The Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council

Number: 1327/....

Date: 6/12/69 [25 February 1991]

Enclosure: None

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani

Head of the Office of the Esteemed Leader [Khamenei]

Greetings!

After greetings, with reference to the letter #1/783 dated 10/10/69 [31 December 1990], concerning the instructions of the Esteemed Leader which had been conveyed to the Respected President regarding the Bahá’í question, we inform you that, since the respected President and the Head of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council had referred this question to this Council for consideration and study, it was placed on the Council’s agenda of session #128 on 16/11/69 [5 February 1991] and session #119 of 2/11/69 [22 January 1991]. In addition to the above, and further to the [results of the] discussions held in this regard in session #112 of 2/5/66 [24 July 1987] presided over by the Esteemed Leader (head and member of the Supreme Council), the recent views and directives given by the Esteemed Leader regarding the Bahá’í question were conveyed to the Supreme Council. In consideration of the contents of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the religious and civil laws and general policies of the country, these matters were carefully studied and decisions pronounced.

In arriving at the decisions and proposing reasonable ways to counter the above question, due consideration was given to the wishes of the Esteemed Leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran [Khamenei], namely, that “in this regard a specific policy should be devised in such a way that everyone will understand what should or should not be done.” Consequently, the following proposals and recommendations resulted from these discussions.

The respected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the Head of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council, while approving these recommendations, instructed us to convey them to the Esteemed Leader [Khamenei] so that appropriate action may be taken according to his guidance.

Continued next page

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A. General status of the Bahá'ís within the country's system

1. They will not be expelled from the country without reason.
2. They will not be arrested, imprisoned, or penalized without reason.
3. The government's dealings with them must be in such a way that their progress and development are blocked.

B. Educational and cultural status

1. They can be enrolled in schools provided they have not identified themselves as Bahá'ís.
2. Preferably, they should be enrolled in schools which have a strong and imposing religious ideology.
3. They must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Bahá'ís.
4. Their political (espionage) activities must be dealt with according to appropriate government laws and policies, and their religious and propaganda activities should be answered by giving them religious and cultural responses, as well as propaganda.
5. Propaganda institutions (such as the Islamic Propaganda Organization) must establish an independent section to counter the propaganda and religious activities of the Bahá'ís.
6. A plan must be devised to confront and destroy their cultural roots outside the country.

C. Legal and social status

1. Permit them a modest livelihood as is available to the general population.
2. To the extent that it does not encourage them to be Bahá'ís, it is permissible to provide them the means for ordinary living in accordance with the general rights given to every Iranian citizen, such as ration booklets, passports, burial certificates, work permits, etc.
3. Deny them employment if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís.
4. Deny them any position of influence, such as in the educational sector, etc.

Wishing you divine confirmations,

Secretary of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council

Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani

[Signature]

[Note in the handwriting of Mr. Khamenei]

In the Name of God!

The decision of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council seems sufficient.

I thank you gentlemen for your attention and efforts.

[signed:] Ali Khamenei

Persian original of a 29 October 2005 letter from Iranian military headquarters to police forces around the country calling for the identification and monitoring of Bahá'ís.

کپی محرمانه

فرماندهی کل نیروهای مسلح
ستاد کل نیروهای مسلح

شماره: ۳/۳۲/۴۷/۸۵
تاریخ: ۲ - ۱۳۸۵
پیوست: سلامتی رهبر

ار: ستاد کل نیروهای مسلح
به: کیوندگان ذیل
موضوع: شناسایی افراد فرقه های ضاله بهائیت و بابیت

با سلام و صلوات بر محمد و آل محمد (ص) ضمن عرض تسلیت به مناسبت شهادت مولی الموحدين امیر مومنان (ع) و با آرزوی قبولی طاعات و عبادات، پیرو گزارشات واصله از فعالیتهای و تشکیل جلسات مخفیانه فرقه های ضاله بهائیت و بابیت در تهران و شهرستانهای کشور، بنا به دستور مقام معظم رهبری جنرت آیت الله خامنه ای (مدظله العالی)، ستاد کل نیروهای مسلح مأمور گردید تا گزارش جامع و کاملی از کلیه فعالیتهای این فرقه ها (اعم از سیاسی، اقتصادی، اجتماعی و فرهنگی) جهت شناسایی کلیه افراد این فرقه های ضاله تهیه و ارسال نماید. لذا خواهشمند است به میمادی ذنبوط ابلاغ فرمایید تا موکونه اطلاعاتی در زمینه شناسایی مذکور از این افراد را به ضرورت کلیتی محرمانه جمع آوری و به این ستاد گزارش فرمایید.

هراتب بمنظور تدبیر به سجنر مبارک مقام معظم رهبری و فرمانده معظم کل قوا (مدظله العالی) ابلاغ می گردد.

کیوندگان:

- وزارت اطلاعات جمهوری اسلامی ایران
- عقیدتی سیاسی فرماندهی کل قوا
- فرمانده کل سپاه پاسداران
- فرمانده نیروهای مقاومت بسیج سپاه پاسداران
- فرمانده نیروی انتظامی جمهوری اسلامی ایران
- معاونت آگاهی نیروی انتظامی جمهوری اسلامی ایران
- نماینده ولی فقیه در سپاه پاسداران
- رئیس سازمان عقیدتی سیاسی نیروی انتظامی جمهوری اسلامی ایران
- فرمانده کل ارتش جمهوری اسلامی ایران

رونوشت:

رئیس محترم دوه شناسایی - جنورت آیت الله شاهرودی جهت اطلاع و اقدام لازم.

رئیس محترم دفتر مقام معظم رهبری - دو نسب نسجنی مقیدی شراری جهت اطلاع.

رئیس ستاد کل نیروهای مسلح
سرلشکر نسجنی دکتر سید حسن نیروز آبادی

English translation of a 29 October 2005 letter from Iranian military headquarters to police forces around the country calling for the identification and monitoring of Bahá'ís.

Translation from Persian

Urgent/Immediate [Stamp]

Logo of the Armed
Forces

[The Office of] the Commander in Chief

Logo of the IRI

Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces

Highly Confidential [Stamp]

From: Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces
To: Recipients Listed Below
Subject: Identification of individuals of the misguided
Sects of Bahaism and Babism

Number: A/3/2/47/15
Date: 7/8/1384 [29/10/2005]
Enclosure: Salamati Rahbar
[Health of the Supreme
Leader]

With salutations and praise to Muhammad and his descendants (S) [May the Blessing of God be Upon Him and His Descendants], while we express our deepest sympathy on the occasion of the martyrdom of the Lord of believers in divine unity and the Commander of the faithful (MPUH) [May Peace be Upon Him], and wishing for the acceptance of [our] obligations and worships, further to the reports received concerning the secret activities and meetings of the misguided sects of Bahaism and Babism, in Tehran and other cities in the country, and according to the instructions of the Exalted Rank of the Supreme Leader, His Holiness Ayatollah Khamenei (may his exalted shadow be extended), the Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces has been given the mission to acquire a comprehensive and complete report of all the activities of these sects (including political, economic, social and cultural) for the purpose of identifying all the individuals of these misguided sects. Therefore, we request that you convey to relevant authorities to, in a highly confidential manner, collect any and all information about the above-mentioned activities of these individuals and report it to this Command Headquarters.

This [either this information, or the reports to be received] will be submitted for the blessed consideration of the Exalted Rank of the Supreme Leader, the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces (may his exalted shadow be extended).

Signed: Chairman of the Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces
Basij Major General. Dr. Seyyed Hossein Firuzabadi

Recipients:

- The Ministry of Information of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- The Belief-Political [organization] of [the office of] the Commander in Chief

جمهوری اسلامی ایران
وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فناوری

محرمانه

شماره: ۹۳۷۵/۹۳
تاریخ: ۱۳۸۵/۰۳/۰۹

مهریت محترم حرامست:

۱- دانشگاه اصفهان ۲- دانشگاه ارومیه ۳- دانشگاه اصفهان ۴- دانشگاه ابراهیم ۵- دانشگاه الزهراء (س)
۶- دانشگاه بوعلی سینا ۷- دانشگاه تبریز ۸- دانشگاه تهران ۹- دانشگاه بین‌المللی امام خمینی (ره) ۱۰- دانشگاه پیام نور
۱۱- دانشگاه تبریز ۱۲- دانشگاه تربیت مدرس ۱۳- دانشگاه تربیت معلم تهران ۱۴- دانشگاه تربیت معلم
انزلیجان ۱۵- دانشگاه تربیت معلم مازان ۱۶- دانشگاه تهران ۱۷- دانشگاه خوارزمی ۱۸- دانشگاه زنجان
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۹۹- دانشگاه زنجان ۱۰۰- دانشگاه زنجان

موضوع: ممنوعیت تحصیل افراد بهائیان در دانشگاه‌ها

باسلام

احتراماً، به آگاهی می‌رساند، براساس مصوبه شماره ۱۳۳۷/م/س مورخ ۶۹/۱۲/۶ شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی و اعلام مراجع ذیصلاح امنیتی، ناخواست بهائیان چنانچه در حین ورود به دانشگاه و یا حین تحصیل مشخص گردند که بهائیان هستند، می‌بایست از دانشگاه اخراج گردند. لذا ضروری است نسبت به جلوگیری از ادامه تحصیل یا اشتغال سرانجام اقدام لازم به‌سپردارید. نتیجه را به این مرکز منعکس فرمایید.

امیر ارغی
مدیرکل حفاظت مرکزی
۱۳۸۵/۰۳/۰۹

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM
PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [].]

Date: [?]/[?]/1385 [2006] [Emblem]
Number: [Illegible] In the Name of God
Islamic Republic of Iran
[Illegible]: M/2/3/9378
Ministry of Science, Research and Technology
[Unidentified emblem]

Confidential

The esteemed management of the Security Office,
[The 81 universities addressed in this letter are listed
below.]

Subject: Banning of the education of Bahá'ís in
universities

Greetings,

Respectfully, we inform you that in accordance
with decree number 1327/M/S, dated 6/12/69 [25
February 1991], issued by the Supreme Revolution-
ary Cultural Council and the notification of the
responsible authorities of the Intelligence [Office], if
Bahá'í individuals, at the time of enrolment at uni-
versity or in the course of their studies, are identified
as Bahá'ís, they must be expelled from university.
Therefore, it is necessary to take measures to prevent
the further studies of the aforementioned [individu-
als] and forward a follow-up report to this Office.
Asghar Zári'í [Asghar Zarei]

Director General of the Central Security Office
[Signature]

[The list of 81 universities]

1. University of Arák [Arak]
2. Urúmiyyih [Urmia] University
3. University of Isfahán [Isfahan]
4. Ílám [Ilam] University
5. Al-Zahrá [Alzahra] University
6. Bú-'Alí Síná [Bu Ali Sina] University

7. University of Bírjand [Birjand]
8. Imam Khomeini International University
9. Payám-i-Núr [Payame Noor] University
10. University of Tabríz [Tabriz]
11. Tarbiat Modares [Lecturer Training] University
12. Tarbiat Moallem [Teacher Training] University
of Tihrán [Tehran]
13. Ádharbáyján [Azerbaijan] Tarbíyat-i-Mu'allim
[Teacher Training] University
14. Sabzivár [Sabzevar] Teacher Training University
15. University of Tihrán [Tehran]
16. Persian Gulf University
17. Rází [Razi] University
18. Zábul [Zabol] University
19. Zanján [Zanjan] University
20. Simnán University [Semnan]
21. University of Sístán and Balúchistán [Sistan and
Baluchestan]
22. Shahr-i-Kurd [Shahrekord] University
23. Sháhídh [Shahid] University
24. Sháhídh Bá-Hunar [Shahid Bahonar] University
of Kirmán [Kerman]
25. Sháhídh Bihishtí [Shahid Beheshti] University
26. Sháhídh Chamrán [Shahid Chamran] University
of Ahváz [Ahvaz]
27. Shíráz [Shiraz] University
28. Isfahán [Isfahan] University of Technology
29. Amírkabír [Amirkabir] University of Technolo-
gy
30. Sháhrúd [Shahrud] University of Technology
31. Khájíh Nasiru'd-Dín-i-Túsi [Khajeh Nasir ad-
Din Toosi] University of Technology
32. Sahand [Sahand] University of Technology of
Tabríz [Tabriz]
33. Sharíf [Sharif] University of Technology
34. 'Allámiy-i-Tabátabá'í [Allameh Tabatabaei]
University
35. Iran University of Science and Technology
36. Gurgán [Gorgan] University of Agricultural
Sciences and Natural Resources

37. Firdawsí [Ferdowsi] University of Mashhad [Mashhad]
38. University of Káshán [Kashan]
39. University of Kurdistán [Kurdistan]
40. University of Gílán [Guilan]
41. Luristán [Lorestan] University
42. University of Muhaqqiq Ardabílí [Mohaghegh Ardebili]
43. University of Mázindarán [Mazandaran]
44. Shahíd Rajá'í [Shahid Rajaei] Teacher Training University
45. Valíyy-i-'Asr [Vali-e-Asr] University of Rafsan-ján [Rafsanjan]
46. Hurmuzgán [Hormozgan] University
47. University of Art
48. University of Applied Science and Technology
49. University of Yazd
50. Dámghán [Damghan] University of Basic Sciences
51. Yásúj [Yasuj] University
52. Isfáhán [Isfahan] University of Art
53. Khurramshahr [Khorramshahr] University of Nautical Sciences and Technology
54. University of Qum [Qom]
55. University of Maláyir [Malayer]
56. Shumál [Shomal] University
57. University of Science and Culture
58. Irshád [Irshad] University of Damávand [Dam-avand]
59. Khátam [Khatam] University
60. University of Tafrish [Tafresh]
61. University of Bujnúrd [Bojnurd]
62. Gulpáygán [Golpaygan] School of Engineering
63. School of Economic Affairs
64. Non-profit Khayyám [Khayyam] Institute
65. Non-governmental and non-profit Sajjád [Sad-jad] Institute, Mashhad [Mashhad]
66. Non-governmental and non-profit Shahíd Ashrafí Isfahání [Shahid Ashrafi Isfahani] Insti-tute
67. Non-governmental and non-profit 'Alla-miy-i-Muhadath-i-Núrí [Allameh Mohadas Noori] Institute
68. Non-governmental and non-profit Institute of Tabaristán [Tabarestan]
69. Non-profit Institute for Development and Rural Advancement of Hamidán [Hamedan]
70. Nautical and Marine Science Centre of Higher Education of Cháhbahár [Chahbahar]
71. Institute of Higher Education of Marághih [Maragheh]
72. University of Islamic Sects
73. Jund-i-Shapúr [Jundishapur] Institute of High-er Education of Dizfúl [Dezful]
74. Shíráz [Shiraz] University of Technology
75. Sajjád [Sadjad] Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad [Mashhad]
76. Mufíd [Mofid] University of Qum [Qom]
77. Varámín [Varamin] University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
78. Institute of Higher Education for Occupation
79. Najafábád [Najafabad] Institute of Higher Education
80. Iran Institute of Higher Education for Technol-ogy Research
81. Imam Khomeini Research Center

Persian original of a 9 April 2007 letter to police commanders around Tehran that calls for tight restrictions on Bahá'í businesses.

شماره: ۱۳۸۶/۲/۱۰
تاریخ: ۸/۴/۷۷
پروست: رازر

(۱)
جمهوری اسلامی ایران

از پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی ف.ا.ا. تهران - اداره نظارت بر اماکن عمومی
به: فرماندهان محترم انتظامی شهرستانهای تابعه - روسای پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی
موضوع: بررسی صلاحیت افراد گروهکی و فرق ضاله بهائیت
سلام علیهم

باصوات بر محمد و آل محمد (ص) و با احترام، به استناد دستورالعمل واحداً از رویاست محترم پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی ناجا - نظارت بر اماکن عمومی (بشماره ۱۴۳۰/۵/۲:۳۱ مورخه ۸۵/۱۲/۲۱) و با عنایت به افزایش مراجعات و ایستگان به فرقه ضاله بهائیت جهت اخذ پروانه کسب و حضور موجه و قانونی آنها در جامعه اصناف پس از اخذ پروانه، ضروری است بمنظور کنترل و نظارت مستمر بر فعالیت آنان و حتی المقدور جلوگیری از حضور وسیع آنان در سطح صنوف حساس و مهم و سازمانهای صنفی و همچنین افراد گروهکی متقاضی پروانه کسب ضمن مد نظر قرار دادن موارد ذیل برابر دستور العمل شماره ۱۴۳۰/۷/۱۰۰ مورخه ۸۲/۲/۱۷ (کمسیون بررسی نهائی) که نوع پرونده های قابل طرح در کمسیون را مشخص می نماید اقدام گردد.

الف) فرق ضاله بهائیت:
(۱) نسبت به شناسائی افراد بهائی شاغل در صنوف و جمع آوری آمار به تفکیک (میزان پراکندگی، نوع رسته شغلی) اقدام نمایند.

(۲) از فعالیت آنان مشاغل یادآمد زانی بالا جلوگیری و صرفاً با صدور مجوز یا پروانه کسب در رسته های شغلی که بتوانند در حد متعارف امرار معاش نمایند موافقت گردد.

(۳) از صدور مجوز فعالیت برای افراد مذکور در رسته های شغلی حساس (فردی، تربیتی، اقتصادی، نظیر جرایم و نشریات، جواهر و طلا سازی و ساعت و چاپخانه داران، و کباب و سبزی، موسسات توریستی و انجمن کرایه، ناشران کتابفروشان، مسافرخانه داران، هتلداران، آژانسهای خیمایی، عکاسی و فیلمبرداری، گیم نت، وایانه، کافی نت) جلوگیری بعمل آید.

(۴) در راستای اجرای احکام شرعی برای پیروان فرقه ضاله بهائیت جهت فعالیت در رسته های شغلی مشروط به طهارت (۱- تالارهای پذیرائی ۲- رستوران و سلف مشروب ۳- اغذیه فروشان و مواد غذایی ۴- چلوکباب و چلو خورشت ۵- قهوه خانه ۶- فروشندگان مواد پروتئینی و سوپر مارکت ۷- بستنی و آبمیوه و نوشابه ۸- قنادی و شیرینی فروشی ۹- کافه، شاپ، پرونده صادر نمیگردد.

۱۳۸۶/۲/۱۰

English translation 9 April 2007 letter to police commanders around Tehran that calls for tight restrictions on Bahá'í businesses.

[TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

Date: 19/1/1386 [9 April 2007]

From: The Public Intelligence and Security Force, Tehran — Public Places Supervision Office

To: Esteemed Commanders of County Police Forces — Heads of the Public Intelligence and Security Force;

Subject: Review of the eligibility of individuals belonging to small groups and the perverse Bahaist sect

Greetings,

May peace be upon Muhammad and His family! With respect, and based on the instructions received from the Head of the Public Intelligence and Security Force (NÁJÁ) — Public Places Supervision Office (number 31/2/5/30/14, dated 21/12/85 [12 March 2007]) and with due attention to the increase in the number of requests from the perverse Bahaist sect to obtain work permits and their rightful and legal presence in the crafts industry once they have acquired their work permit; it is necessary, for the benefit of the ongoing monitoring and supervision of their activities and in order to halt — as much as possible — their extensive presence throughout sensitive and important craft organizations and also individuals from small groups requesting work permits, for measures to be taken with due consideration for the below points based on instruction number 100/7/30/14, dated 17/2/82 [8 May 2003] (Final Review Commission), which determines the cases to go before the Commission.

a. Perverse Bahaist Sect

1. Take measures to identify Bahá'í individuals working in craft businesses and collect statistics broken down by (their distribution and type of occupation).
2. Their activities in high-earning businesses should be halted, and only those work permits that would provide them with an ordinary livelihood should be allowed.
3. Issuing of [work] permits for the activities of the mentioned individuals in sensitive business categories (culture, propaganda, commerce, the press, jewelery and watchmaking, coffee shops, engraving, the tourist industry, car rentals, publishing, hostel and hotel management, tailoring training institutes, photography and film, [illegible] Internet, computer sales and Internet cafés), should be prevented.
4. In accordance with the religious canons, work permits will not be issued to the followers of the perverse Bahaist sect in business categories related to Tahárat [cleanliness] (1. catering at reception halls, 2. buffets and restaurants, 3. grocery shops, 4. kebab shops, 5. cafés, 6. protein [poultry] shops and supermarkets, 7. ice cream parlors, fruit juice and soft drinks shops, 8. pastry shops, 9. coffee shops.

Persian original of 15 March 2009 letter from the Public Places Supervision Office of Kerman Province to Rafsanjan police commanders instructing them to restrict real estate purchases by Bahá'ís.

طبقه بندی محرمانه	شماره: ۲۹۱۴، ۶، ۴۵		بسمه تعالی
تاریخ: ۱۷/۳/۹۵			
پیوست:			

از: پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی ف. ا. استان کرمان (اداره نظارت بر اماکن عمومی)
 به: فرماندهی محترم انتظامی شهرستان رفسنجان - پابوا
 موضوع: بهائیت
 سلام علیکم

با محلات بر محمد و آل محمد و با احترام ، در پاسخ به شماره ۲۹۵۴/۱۴/۳۷۰۳۸ مورخه ۸۷/۷/۸ همانطور که طی دستورالعملهای متعدد اعلام گردیده به منظور جلوگیری از حضور وسیع وابستگان فرقه ضاله بهائیت در سطح صنف و سازمانهای صنفی، از فعالیت آنان در مشاغل با درآمد زایی بالا جلوگیری و صرفاً در رسته های شغلی که بتوانند در حد متعارف امرار معاش نمایند موافقت و توجه شود که تسلط و برتری در هر شغلی را پیدا ننمایند تا عملاً "توان رقابت از سایر افراد مسلمان گرفته نشده و تصمیم سازی شغل نشوند و تجمع تعدادی از وابستگان این فرقه ضاله در یک محل تبعیض را برای جامعه اصناف در پی دارد لذا به رؤسای اتحادیه ها و سازمانهای صنفی و مبادی ذریع اطلاع رسانی کلی انجام تا از غریب املاک و مستغلات در یک مکان نزدیک به هم توسط آنان جلوگیری و از گسترش اعضای این فرقه در یک صنف و شغل و بازاریب معانعت و در این راستا رؤسای اتحادیه ها توجیه و از مساعدت امت حزب ا. و بسیج و سازمان تبلیغات اسلامی و سایر دستگاهها نیز استفاده گردد.

رئیس پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی ف. ا. استان کرمان
 سرهنگ پاسدار انزلی
 محمد علی...

English translation of a 15 March 2009 letter from the Public Places Supervision Office of Kerman Province to Rafsanjan police commanders instructing them to restrict real estate purchases by Bahá'ís.

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [].]

Classification: Confidential	[Emblem]	In the Name of God
Number: 45/4/2914		
Date: 25/12/87 [15 March 2009]		

From: The Public Intelligence and National Security Force F.A.[A.] of Kerman Province
(Public Places Supervision Office)¹

To: Esteemed Commanders of Police Forces of Rafsanján [Rafsanjan]—PAVA [The Public
Intelligence and National Security Force]

Subject: Baháism

Greetings,

Peace be upon Muḥammad and His descendents! In response to [a letter] number 7038/3/14/2954, dated 8/7/87 [29 September 2008], as has been communicated through many instructions, in order to prevent the extensive presence of the adherents of the perverse Bahaist sect in trades and trade organizations, and their activities in high-income businesses, they should only be allowed to have enough income to survive, so that they do not obtain high positions in any business, take away competitive power from individual Muslims, and become the decision makers in a trade. The congregation of a number of the followers of this perverse sect in one area will have consequences for the trade business. Therefore, the heads of the unions and relevant trade organizations should be sufficiently informed to prevent them [Bahá'ís] from purchasing properties and real estate near each other in one location. The members of this sect should be prevented from having extensive presence in any one trade, business, or market place. The heads of the unions should be instructed on this matter and request assistance from Hizbu'lláh [Hezbollah], Basij [Basij], Society for the Promotion of Islam, and other organizations.

Head of Public Intelligence and Security Forces F.A.[A.] of Kerman Province
Colonel of Islamic Revolutionary Guards
[Signed] on behalf of Colonel Ḥamid Sulṭání [Hamid Soltani]
Dána'í [Danaie]

¹ ["Edare-ye Amaken": reportedly responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in places of work and other offices.]

Persian original of a 30 August 2009 notice to a Bahá'í business in Semnan, cancelling their business permit.

بسم تعالی

اتحادیه صنف یونیک شهرستان سمنان

تاریخ: ۸۸/۵/۲۴

شماره: [REDACTED]

پیوست: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

با توجه به اینکه از طرف اداره نظارت بر اماکن عمومی نیروی انتظامی استان سمنان طی نامه ای به تاریخ ۸۸/۵/۲۴ پروانه کسبی شما را اسقاط صلاحیت اعلام نمودند و از اتحادیه صنف پوشاک سمنان خواسته شد که نسبت به ابطال پروانه کسب شما اقدام نمایند و هیئت رئیسه اتحادیه در تاریخ ۸۸/۵/۲۷ طی اخطار کتبی به شماره ۲۵۰ بابت پرداخت حق عضویت و در تاریخ ۸۸/۶/۳ طی نامه شماره ۲۵۹ از شما خواسته شد با در دست داشتن اصل پروانه و کارت عضویت به اتحادیه مراجعه نمایید و شفاهاً هم خدمتتان عرض کردیم ولی متأسفانه هیچگونه اقدامی جهت تحویل پروانه کسب به اتحادیه از طرف شما صورت نگرفت و اتحادیه بنا به وظیفه خود پروانه کسبی شما را ابطال نموده است و با توجه به اینکه پروانه کسبی شما باطل می باشد و هرگونه سوء استفاده از پروانه کسب از این تاریخ مورد پیگرد قانونی قرار خواهد گرفت لذا خواهشمندیم هرچه زودتر لاشه باطله پروانه کسب را به اتحادیه تحویل نمایید.

ابراهیم خدین

رئیس اتحادیه صنف پوشاک شهرستان سمنان

۱۳۸۸/۰۸/۰۷

رونوشت:

- ریاست محترم اداره نظارت بر اماکن عمومی استان سمنان جهت استحضار و پیگیری
- ریاست محترم مجمع امور صنفی مشترک شهرستان سمنان جهت استحضار
- مدیریت محترم سازمان بازرگانی استان سمنان جهت استحضار

[REDACTED]

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [].]

Date: 8/6/88 [30 August 2009]

In the Name of God

Clothing Trade Union of Semnan

Number: Number: [REDACTED]

In view of the fact that the Public Places Supervision Office of the Police¹ for the province of Semnan has notified you, through a letter dated 24/5/88 [15 August 2009], that it has invalidated your business permit; the fact that the Clothing Trade Union of Semnan has accordingly been asked to cancel your business permit; that, furthermore, the Board of Directors of the Union provided you with a letter of warning dated 27/5/88 [18 August 2009], reference 250, concerning your membership payment and sent you a subsequent letter dated 3/6/88 [25 August 2009], reference 259, asking you to report to the Union Office with your original business permit and your membership card; and that you have also been notified verbally; [but that regardless of the foregoing], however, you have made no efforts to return your business permit to the Union; the Union has now fulfilled its responsibility by cancelling your permit. Given that your business permit is no longer valid, any misuse of it is subject to legal prosecution. Please return the invalidated permit to the Union as soon as possible.

Ibráhím Jandaqíyán [Ebrahim Jandaghian]

Director of Clothing Trade Union of Semnan

[Signature] 8/6/88 [30 August 2009]

[Official stamp of the Union]


cc:

- Respected General Director of Public Places Supervision Office for the Police of the province of Semnan, for information and further action;
- Respected General Director of Association of Unions of Semnan, for information;
- Respected Director of the Bureau of Commerce of the province of Semnan, for information

Letter number: [REDACTED]

¹ ["Edare-ye Amaken": reportedly responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in places of work and other offices.]

Persian original of 23 June 2011 court ruling in Laljin acquitting a Muslim of the crime of usury because the plaintiff was a Bahá'í.

شماره دادنامه: [redacted] شماره پرونده: [redacted] شماره پایگانی شعبه: [redacted] تاریخ تنظیم: [redacted] پیوست:	«فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْبَيْتَ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا» شعبه ۱۰۱ دادگاه عمومی (جزایی) بخش لالجین	 دادگستری جمهوری اسلامی ایران
دادنامه		
پرونده کلاس: [redacted] شعبه ۱۰۱ دادگاه عمومی (جزایی) بخش لالجین دادنامه شماره [redacted] شاکی: [redacted] با وکالت خانم شهلا زنگیوندی و آقای رضا نادری مقدم همگی به نشانی کرمانشاه، ترسیده به ۳ راه شویعی، نیش کوچه ۲۲۶، ساختمان ۳ طبقه نقره، طبقه ۳ متهم: آقای [redacted] به نشانی حسین آباد، جنب کارخانه قند اتهام: کلاهبرداری		
دادگاه با توجه به محتویات اوراق پرونده ختم رسیدگی را اعلام و به شرح ذیل میادرت به صدور رای می نماید.		
رای دادگاه		
در خصوص اتهام [redacted] دادر بر رباخواری موضوع شکایت [redacted] با وکالت رضا نادری مقدم بدین شرح که شاکی با شکایت مطروحه مدعی شده است که در سال ۷۹ از حدود سه میلیون تومان وجه ربوی از وی دریافت که ماهیانه درصدی سود آن را محاسبه و در مواردی که سود آن را پرداخت نکرده است مبلغ سود به اصل پول اضافه و نهایتاً هفده میلیون تومان به وی پرداخت کرده است که پس از آخرین محاسبه به وی اعلام داشته است که هفتاد و شش میلیون تومان دیگر با بد به وی پرداخت کند که به منظور اثبات ادعای خود یک حلقه CD که حاکی از مذاکرات وی در رابطه با مطالب پرداختی است و یک لیست دست نوشته متهم را ارائه که پس از تحقیقات و احضار متهم به منظور رسیدگی به پرونده متهم ابتدا منکر اخذ ربا گردید که پس از صدور قرار کارشناسی و استکتاب از دست نوشته وی نهایتاً کارشناسی منتخب اعلام نموده است که اسناد و مدارک ارائه شده و متن چکهای صادره دلالت بر صحت ادعای شاکی دارد که در آخرین جلسه و مواجهه حضوری فی ما بین پس از آنکه نظریه کارشناسی متهم ضمن اقرار ضمنی به اخذ ربا اظهار میدارد که چون شاکی جزء بهائیت است لذا بزه ای مرتکب نشده است که در پاسخ به ادعای مطروحه از سوی متهم و تحقیق از شاکی با ارائه تصویر دادنامه شماره [redacted] ک صادره از شعبه ۱۲ محاکم عمومی همدان اظهار میدارد که جزء فرقه خاله بهائیت است که پس از اظهارات شاکی با عنایت به سکوت قانون در رابطه با جواز اخذ ربا از شاکی با شرایط اعلام شده مستنداً به اصل یکصد و شصت و هفتم قانون اساسی جمهوری اسلامی ایران و ماده ۲۱۲ قانون آیین دادرسی کیفری که آمده است قاضی مکلف است حکم هر قضیه را در قوانین مدون بیابد و اگر قانونی در خصوص مورد نباشد یا استناد به منابع فقهی معتبر و یا فتاوی معتبر حکم قضیه را صادر نماید. مراتب طی نامه شماره ۸۹۱۳۱۶ - ۹۰/۲/۱۱ از دفتر استفتائات حضرت آیت اله خامنه ای استعلام و در پاسخ طی شماره ۱۲۸۶۵۱ مرقوم داشته اند که ربا گرفتن از اعضاء فرقه مضله فی نفسه اشکال ندارد بنابراین مستنداً به مواد فوق و استفتاء به عمل آمده و با استناد به اصل ۳۷ قانون اساسی جمهوری اسلامی ایران رای بر برائت متهم صادر و اعلام میگردد رای صادره حضوری است ظرف بیست و سه روز پس از ابلاغ قابل اعتراض و تجدیدنظر خواهی در محاکم تجدیدنظر استان همدان است.		
برآی - رئیس شعبه اول دادگاه بخش لالجین رونوشت برابر با اصل امارتست. مدیر دفتر دادگاه عمومی لالجین [Signature]		

English translation of 23 June 2011 court ruling in Laljin acquitting a Muslim of the crime of usury because the plaintiff was a Bahá'í.

[TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

Court Order No.: [REDACTED]

File No.: [REDACTED]

Branch Archival Ref. [REDACTED]

Date of Issuance:

2/4/1390 [23 June 2011]

Enclosure:

**Do not follow (your) low desires,
lest you deviate**

**Branch 101 of the Public (Penal)
Court of Láljín Division**

[Emblem]

Islamic Republic of Iran
Judiciary

Court Order

Case Ref. [REDACTED], Branch 101 of the Public (Penal) Court of Láljín Division

Court Order No. [REDACTED]

Plaintiff: Mr. [REDACTED], represented by Mrs. Shahla
Zangbúndí [Shahla Zangboundí] and Mr. Riḏá Nádírí Muqaddam [Reza Naderi Moghadam].
[Address]

Accused: Mr. [REDACTED] [address]

Charge: Fraud [Usury]

Having reviewed and considered the evidence and the case documents, the court hereby concludes the hearing and renders a decision as follows:

Decision of the Court

The defendant, [REDACTED], is alleged to have committed usury against the plaintiff, [REDACTED] represented by Counsel Riḏá Nádírí Muqaddam. The plaintiff claims that in [13]79 [2000/01], he borrowed a sum of 3,000,000 tuman with interest from [the defendant]. [The plaintiff] claims that he calculated the monthly interest, and on occasions when the interest was not paid, it was added to the principal. Ultimately, the sum of 17 million tuman was paid to the defendant, and subsequent to final calculation, [the defendant] informed him [the plaintiff], that a remaining 76 million [tuman] was still owed to him [the defendant]. To prove his claim, [the plaintiff] has produced a compact disc containing a conversation between him and the defendant concerning sums that have been paid. [The plaintiff] further produced a handwritten list by the defendant. Subsequent to the inquiries and summoning of the defendant for the purpose of further investigation, the defendant first denied the [act of] usury; however, after the investigation order was issued and copies were made of his [the defendant's] handwritten notes, the detective assigned to the case determined that the documents and evidence provided in this case, including cheques that were written, supported the claim of the plaintiff. Furthermore, in the last hearing, after cross-examining the facts between the parties subsequent to reviewing the findings of the detective, the defendant made an indirect admission to usury, but added that since the plaintiff is a Bahá'í, he [the defendant] has not committed any crime. In response to such claim [that the plaintiff is a Bahá'í] by the defendant, an inquiry was made of the plaintiff, and with reference to a copy of court order number [REDACTED] issued by Branch 12 of the Public Courts in Hamadán, the plaintiff admitted that he was a member of the perverse sect of Bahaism. Subsequent to the admissions of the plaintiff, considering the absence of codified law with respect to license to exercise usury under the given circumstances, pursuant to Article 167 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Article 214 of the Hearing Procedures Act in criminal matters, which states that the judge is bound to endeavour to adjudicate each case on the basis of codified law, and in case of the absence of such law, he has to deliver his judgment on the basis of authoritative Islamic sources and authentic *fatwas*, reference was made to letter number 891316-1/2/90 [21 April 2011] from the office of His Holiness Ayatollah Khamenei, who had said in letter reference 148651 that usury against members of the perverse sect is inconsequential. Therefore, pursuant to the above referenced articles and the religious advice, as well as Article 37 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the court hereby issues an order of acquittal for the defendant. This court order was issued in the presence [of the parties] and can be appealed within 20 days of its issuance at the courts of appeal in the Province of Hamadán.

Murádi [Moradi]—Head of Branch 1 of the Court of Láljín Division [previously indicated as Branch 101]

Certified Copy—Secretariat of Public Courts of Láljín [Laljin] 28/4/90 [19 July 2011]
[Stamp]

Persian original of a 7 August 2011 letter to the Iran Insurance Company from the Prosecutor's Office of Arak, saying that signing contracts with a Bahá'í is legally prohibited.



English translations of a 7 August 2011 letter to the Iran Insurance Company from the Prosecutor's Office of Arak, saying that signing contracts with a Bahá'í is legally prohibited.

[TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [.].]

Date: 16/5/1390 [7 August 2011]

Number: [REDACTED]

Enclosure:

[REDACTED]

[Emblem]

Judiciary

Central Provincial Court of Administrative

Justice

Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office of the City
of Arák

In the Name of the Most High

Respected Director of Iran Insurance Company

Peace be upon you!

Based on information received, you have signed a contract with [REDACTED] in relation to his optical business. He is one of the active members of the perverse sect of Bahaism. Bearing in mind that signing contracts with individuals belonging to the perverse sect is legally prohibited, you must therefore explain the situation in writing.

Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Ṭáhirí [Mohammad Hoseini Taheri]

Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor of the City of Arák

Persian original of a 23 May 2011 letter from the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security stating the transfer of pension contributions is not permitted because the former employee is a Bahá'í.

سازمان بهشتی کشور
اداره کل استان تهران

پست

مدیریت آموزش و پرورش منطقه ۱۷ تهران
موضوع: انتقال کسور بازنشستگی

با سلام و احترام
نظر به اینکه نامبرده طبق حکم شماره ۱۲۳۳۶۰/۱۵ مورخ ۶۲/۱۲/۱۷ لغو حکم استخدامی گردید و تابع مسلک بهائی بوده، لذا انتقال کسور نامبرده مجوزی ندارد.

سرپرست نمایندگی مرکزی شهر تهران

سرپرست آموزش و پرورش منطقه ۱۷
شماره: ۱۷۴۵۴۶۶۴
تاریخ: ۹۰/۳/۱۷

بنام خدا - مسئول محترم دبیرخانه
تقاضای از ثبت در اتوماسیون
برای شمول در استحضار اقدام گردد.
مدیر آموزش و پرورش منطقه ۱۷

English translation of a 23 May 2011 letter from the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security stating the transfer of pension contributions is not permitted because the former employee is a Bahá'í.

[TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

(Emblem)

Ministry of Welfare and Social Security
National Retirement Organization
Directorate General of Tehran Province
Date: 23 May 2011
Numb [REDACTED]

Attachment: Management of the Board of Education District 17 of Tehran

Subject: the transfer of pension contributions of [REDACTED]

Greetings and Regards,

Whereas the employment of the person mentioned above is revoked under ruling number 123360/15 dated 62/12/17 (March 7, 1984). As she is a follower of The Baha'i sect, the transfer of her pension contributions is not permitted.

Mahmood Seil Sapoor (illegible)

Head of Central Agencies of Tehran

Stamps:

1-Secretariat of the board of Education- District 17
Number 17/54664/55
Date 28 May 2011

2- In the name of God - Supervisor of the office of Secretariat

Please be submitted after registration in "automation" so that (illegible) provisions would be applied

Copy

Head of the Board of Education District 17
28 May 2011

Persian original of a 5 August 2007 letter from the national oil company to a Bahá'í saying that, "owing to your membership in the Bahaist sect," his pension cannot be renewed.



English translation of a 5 August 2007 letter from the national oil company to a Bahá'í saying that, "owing to your membership in the Bahaist sect," his pension cannot be renewed.

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [].]

Date: 13/05/1386 [5 August 2007]	[Emblem]
Number: [REDACTED]	National Iranian Oil Products
	Refining & Distribution Company
	Ábádán [Abadan] Oil Products
	Refining Company (Limited)

In the Name of God

Mr. [REDACTED] former employee, number [REDACTED]
Address: [provided]

Greetings,

With reference to your letter dated [REDACTED], addressed to the esteemed presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran in connection with instituting your pension, it is hereby conveyed that, in accordance with Paragraph 11 of Article 20 of the Restructuring of Human Resources Act for government ministries and establishments associated with the government, from 01/08/1361 [24 October 1982], and owing to your membership of the Bahaist sect, you have been permanently removed from your government position and any establishment associated with the government and have been exempted from serving in the company.

In light of the above explanation, any renewal of your pension arrangement is not legally admissible.

[Signed:] Raḥmatu'lláh Raḥímí [Rahmatollah Rahimi]

Administrative Supervisor, Ábádán Oil Products Refining Company

[illegible]

English translation of an 18 February 2010 letter from the Public Places Supervision Office to the head of the Association for Union Affairs, requesting information about Bahá'is in Karaj.

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [].]

The dawn of the revolution is the rising of the sun of independence and freedom.
“Imám Khomeini”

From: Public Places Supervision Office, Tehran

To: The Esteemed Head of the Association for Union Affairs

Subject: Submitting information about the Bahá'is who are operating under the Union

Greetings,

Salutation to Muḥammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him and His family.

Respectfully, please take appropriate measures to immediately release to our office particulars of the Bahá'is who are actively operating under the union in the city of Karaj both with and without a business license according to the following chart:

	Line/Section	
	Name and Surname	
	Father's Name	
	National ID Number	
	Place of Birth	
	Date of Birth	
	Type of Work	
	Manager	Responsibility
	Agent/liaison	
	Staff	
	Janitorial	
	Licensed	Status of the business
	Not Licensed	
	Period in operation	

Head of the Public Places Supervision Office, Tehran

Sergeant Pásdár, Ḥabíbu'lláh Šádiqí
[Stamp—No. 3/631]

29/11/88 [18 February 2010]

Persian original of a 15 June 2009 letter from the head of the Federation of Suppliers of Automobile Spare Parts to the director of Union Affairs in Karaj, asking the activities of Bahá'is be prevented.

اتحادیه صنف فروشندگان
لوازم یدکی اتومبیل کرج
شماره ثبت ۲۰

تاریخ: ۸۸/۳/۲۵
شماره: [REDACTED]
پوست:

بسمه تعالی

رئیس محترم کمیسیون حقوق و عدالت
رئیس: عدم صلاحیت فرقه بابیت
سلام علیکم

لوحه ای که در روز ۱۱۹۵۰ مورخه ۸۷/۹/۹ در درگاه نماینده کتب از فرقه بابیت که
مورد تأیید اداره محترم است که قرار گرفته و دارای فعالیت می باشد و تاکنون هیچگونه
پایان نکرده و از کتب آن هیچ قسمتی که می تواند به عنوان مدرک در دادگاه یا مراجع
دیگر به دست راست لازم جهت پیگیری از فعالیت آن فرقه که در تاریخ ۸۷/۹/۹

رئیس: عدم صلاحیت فرقه بابیت
[Signature]

کرج - میدان آزادگان ساختمان سپید، واحد ۱۶ تلفن: ۲۲۴۲۳۱۹

English translation of a 15 June 2009 letter from the head of the Federation of Suppliers of Automobile Spare Parts to the director of Union Affairs in Karaj, asking the activities of Bahá'ís be prevented.

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [].]

Date: 25/3/88 [15 June 2009] In the Name of God Federation of Suppliers of
Number: [REDACTED] Automobile Spare Parts of Karaj
Enclosure: Registration number 30

To the Esteemed Director of the Association for Union Affairs, [REDACTED]

Subject: Lack of Credibility [Exclusion] of the Bahaism sect

Greetings,

Respectfully, concerning letter 11950, dated 4/9/87 [24 November 2008], with regard to the application for a permit [by members of] the sect of Bahaism—who are not approved by the office of Amákin [Public Places Supervision Office^[1]—and those [Bahá'ís] who are operating [in this field], so far the instructions in the said letter have not been properly executed by your respected association. Should the individuals [belonging to the said group] be still operating, appropriate instructions must be given to prevent their activities.

Head of Federation of Suppliers of Automobile Spare Parts

‘Alí-Akbar Qásimzádi [Ali-Akbar Ghasemzadeh]

[Address]

¹ [“Edare-ye Amaken”: responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in places of work and other offices.]

مجموعه استفتاء، فتوا و نظر شش تن از مراجع عظام تقلید در مورد فرقه ضالّه بهائیت

سوال‌ها مطرح شده :

۱) آیا بهائیت ضالّه و منحرف است؟

۲) آیا بهائیان نجس هستند؟

۳) بهائیان اجازه تبلیغ فرقه خود را در کشور از نظر شرعی دارند؟

پاسخ ها :

• **مقام معظم رهبری حضرت آیت ا... عظمای سید علی خامنه ای (دامت برکاته)**
 بغیر کلی از هرگونه معاشرت با این فرقه ضالّه و مضلّه اجتناب کنید.

۱) به کاملاً منحرف هستند.

۲) به نجس هستند.

۳) چون موجب انحراف و گمراهی مردم می شود اجازت تبلیغ ندارند.

• **حضرت آیت ا... تهرانی**
 ۱) فرقه ای ضالّه است و بسیار منحرف
 ۲) از سبب هم نجس تر هستند و فرقه ای من در آوردی است .
 ۳) تبلیغ فرقه آنها حرام است ، چون گرایش به کفر دارند و سبب جردت دین انسان ها می شوند.

• **حضرت آیت ا... مکارم شیرازی**
 ۱) بهائیان کافر حساب می شوند .
 ۲) بهائیان کافر و مرتد هستند و نجس
 ۳) از نظر شرعی تبلیغ فرقه ضالّه حرام است چون بهائیان نجس و کافر هستند .

• **حضرت آیت ا... وحید خراسانی**
 ۱) به
 ۲) نجس هستند چون کافرانند .
 ۳) اجازه تبلیغ فرقه منحرف و ضالّه خود را ندارند .

• **حضرت آیت ا... العظمی آقای بروجردی**
 لازم است مسلمان نسبت به این فرقه معاشرت و مخالطه و معامله را ترک کنند فقط از مسلمان تقاضا داریم آرامش و حفظ انتقام را از دست ندهند . (مقصود از لزوم در اینجا عرفی نیست بلکه لزوم فقهی است که همان معنای واجب را می دهد .)

• **حضرت آیت ا... العظمی محمد رضا الموسوی کلایکانی**
 به نحوی که حضرت آیه اله العظمی آقای بروجردی قدس سره مرقوم فرموده اند لازم است مسلمان نسبت به این فرقه ضالّه معاشرت و معامله را ترک کنند و از عموم مسلمان تقاضا داریم آرامش و حفظ انتقام را رعایت نمایند . خداوند متعال همه را از شر و فتن آخر الزمان حفظ فرماید .

• **نظر دانشمند ارجمند، حضرت حاجی الاسلام شیخ حسین انصاریان پیرامون فرقه ضالّه بهائیت :**
 اولاً : این فرقه را دشمنان استعمارگر برای مقابله با اسلام اصیل ، طراحی نموده اند، که باید از گرایش به آن فرقه اجتناب نمود، که سرانجامی جز ضلالت و گمراهی ندارد. بعضی از مذاهب ساختگی که در قرون اخیر پیدا شده اند، برای رسیدن به اهداف شوم خود، لازم دیده اند که قبل از هر چیز پایه خائفت پیامبر اسلام (ص) را به گمان خویش متزلزل سازند، لذا بعضی از آیات قرآن را که هیچ دلالتی بر هدف آنها ندارد را به کمک تفسیر به رأی (برداشت شخصی) و سفسطه بر مقصود خود منطبق ساخته اند که یکی از آنها آیه ۳۵ سوره اعراف است. آنها بدون اینکه قبل و بعد این آیات را در نظر بگیرند، می گویند: این آیه (آیه ۳۵ سوره اعراف) با توجه به جمله « ای فرزندان آدم، چون پیامبرانی از جنس خودتان به سوی من آیند که آیات را بر شما بخوانند [به آنان ایمان آورید و آیات را عمل کنید] » که فعل مضارع دارد دلیل بر این است که امکان دارد پس از پیامبر اسلام، پیامبران دیگری میبایست میسر شوند. ولی اگر کسی به عقب برگردیم و آیات گذشته را که از آفرینش آدم و سکونت او در بهشت و سپس رانده شدن او و همسرش از بهشت سخن می گوید ملاحظه کنیم روشن می شود که مخاطب در این آیات مسلمانان نیستند، بلکه مجموع جامعه انسانی و تمام فرزندان آدمند، زیرا شک نیست که برای مجموعه فرزندان آدم رسولان زیادی آمده اند. منتها این عده از دین سازان برای انقراض مردم، آیات گذشته را به دست فراموشی می سپارند و مخاطب در این آیه را خصوص مسلمانان می گیرند و از آن نتیجه گیری می کنند که احتمال رسولان دیگری در کار است. در این گونه سفسطه ها جمله ای از یک آیه را از بقیه جدا می کنند و قبل و بعد آن را نادیده می گیرند و بر مقصودی که تمایل دارند تطبیق می دهند.

ثانیاً : پیروان فرقه بهائیت از آن جهت که دارای افکار و عقایدی کاملاً باطل و ضد حقیقت و خلاف شریعت تپ محمّدی (ص) هستند، از نظر علما و فقهای اسلام، نجس هستند و هر گونه ارتباط با آنها نیز جایز نمی باشد و شرعاً نباید با آن ها معاشرت داشت.

ثالثاً : لازم است به بخشی از عقاید بهائیت توجه کنید تا خود قضاوت نمایید که آن ها چگونه راه خدایان و جهنم را در پیش گرفته اند و هدهای را نیز فریب داده و با خود همراه ساخته اند :

رهبر فرقه بهائیت شخصی به نام «علی محمد باب» است که خود را پیامبر (ص) می داند و ادعای نبوت کرده است، ازدواج معارم مانند ازدواج با خواهر را جایز می داند و حتی به مردان اجازه می دهد همسران خود را در اختیار دیگران قرار دهند. بهشت و جهنم را قبول ندارند، نبوت پیامبر اکرم (ص) را انکار می کنند، خود را صاحب شریعت می پندارند، خود را در زمره پیامبران بلکه برتر و بالاتر می پندارند، شریعت و کتاب ساختگی خود را که موهب از مطالب بی اساس و مزخرفات است را ناسخ شریعت و کتب آسمانی قلمداد نموده اند. «علی محمد باب» که رهبر بهائیت است یا را فراهم گذاشته و ادعای الوهیت (خدایی) نیز نموده است.

English translation of a list issued circa 2010 of fatwas and decrees issued by religious authorities concerning Bahá'ís and commerce.

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets [].]

List of religious inquiries, the opinion and the decrees issued by six Grand Ayatollahs and sources of authority concerning the perverse sect of Bahaism:

Questions:

1. Is Bahaism misguided and perverse?
2. Are Bahá'ís Najis [unclean]?
3. From a religious point of view, do the Bahá'ís have permission to teach their sect in the country?

Answers:

The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei:

Keep away altogether from this perverse and misguided sect.

1. Yes, they are completely perverted.
2. Yes, they are Najis.
3. As they will misguide and lead the people astray, they should not be allowed to teach.

Ayatollah Nouri Hamadani:

1. It is a misguided sect and absolutely perverse.
2. They are even more Najis than dogs. It is a man-made sect.
3. Propagation of their sect is Harám [religiously forbidden], as they are infidels and will lead people to apostasy.

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi:

1. Yes, Bahá'ís are considered infidels.
2. Bahá'ís are infidels, apostates, and Najis.

Continued next page

Ayatollah Vahid Khorasani:

1. Yes.
2. They are Najis because they are infidels.
3. They do not have permission to teach their misguided and perverse sect.

Grand Ayatollah Boroujerdi:

It is necessary that Muslims cut off their association or trade with this sect. I only ask the Muslims not to forget to keep the peace and order. (By necessity we do not mean the same way as it is used in common law; rather, from a religious point of view, which means it is obligatory.)

Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Mousavi Golpayegani:

In the same way that Ayatollah Boroujerdi has decreed, it is incumbent upon Muslims to cut off association and trade with this perverse sect. I ask all the Muslims to keep the peace and order. May God save us all from the evils of the end of the world.

The view of the esteemed scholar, Hujjatu'l-Islám Sheikh Hosein Ansarian concerning the perverse sect of Bahaism:

Firstly, this sect was created by colonialist enemies to confront the noble Islám. Attachment to this sect must be avoided, as it will have no end but misery and perversion. Some of the man-made religions that have appeared during the recent centuries—in order to achieve their evil goals—have found it necessary to, in their own mind, shake the Khátimíyyat^[1] of the prophet of Islám. Thus, they have interpreted some verses of the Qur'án that have nothing to do with their goal and by fallacy have tried to make them in conformity with their own ideas. One of them is Verse 35 of A'ráf. Without quoting the before and after verses, they say that this verse which states, “O ye Children of Adam, whenever there come to you messengers from amongst you, rehearsing My signs unto you...” (believe in them and follow my verses), has a future verb that means it is possible for other prophets to come after the prophet of Islám.

¹ Belief that Muhammad is the last prophet

But if we go back a little and look at the previous verses that talk about the creation of Adam and his life in heaven and then his being expelled from heaven with his wife, we clearly see that these verses are not addressed to Muslims; rather, [they were addressed] to the whole society and the children of Adam. There is no doubt that many prophets have appeared for all the children of Adam. But these creators of religions ignore the previous verses and state that these verses have been addressed to Muslims and then conclude that possibly there will be other prophets of God. In these fallacies, they separate one verse from the others and ignore the verses that come before and after it and adjust it to their own desired interpretation.

Secondly, because the followers of the sect of Bahaism have thoughts and beliefs that are absolutely false and against the noble religion of Islám, according to the decree of the religious leaders and scholars of Islám, they are Najis and any association with them is not permitted, and from a religious point of view, association with them is forbidden.

Thirdly, it is necessary to look at some of the beliefs of Bahaism so that you can judge for yourself how they are pursuing the way of infamy and hell and how they have deceived a number of people into following their own way of life:

The leader of the sect of Bahaism was an individual by the name of 'Alí-Muhammad Báb, who considered himself a Messenger of God and claimed to be one. He allows marriage of those who are forbidden to each other such as one's own sister. He even permits men to offer their wives to others. They do not believe in heaven and hell. They deny that the Prophet of Islám is a Messenger of God. They consider themselves followers of a religion. They consider themselves among the prophets and even better and higher than them. They consider their own man-made book that is full of nonsense and baseless words, the nullifier of all the heavenly books and religions. 'Alí-Muhammad Báb, who is the leader of Bahaism, has even gone further and claimed to be God.

We have posted a number of additional resources online to accompany this booklet. They can be found at: www.bic.org/Bahai-Question-Revisited

They include:

- A list of resolutions by the United Nations and United Nations bodies that reference the situation of Bahá'ís in Iran since 1980.
- A list of Bahá'ís who have been killed in Iran since 1978.
- A summary of some 400 examples of anti-Bahá'í propaganda disseminated by the government or semi-official sources.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Bahá'í Question Revisited: Persecution and Resilience in Iran

A report of the Bahá'í International Community
October 2016