

**BAHÁ'Í  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY**

*United Nations Office*

866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120, New York, NY 10017 USA

Telephone: 1-212-803-2500, Fax: 1-212-803-2566, Email: [uno-nyc@bic.org](mailto:uno-nyc@bic.org)

**PRESS RELEASE**

Baha'i International Community

9 January 2010

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact Bani Dugal in New York at (office) 212-803-2500 or (mobile) 646-404-4210 or Diane Ala'i in Geneva at (office) +41 (-22) -798-5400 or (mobile) +41 (-78) -60-40-100

**Baha'i International Community categorically rejects allegations that recently arrested Baha'is had weapons in their homes**

GENEVA –The Baha'i International Community today categorically rejected new allegations by the Iranian government that arms and ammunition were found in the homes of Baha'is who were arrested in Tehran last Sunday.

“This is nothing less than a blatant lie,” said Diane Ala'i, the Baha'i International Community's representative to the United Nations in Geneva. “Baha'is are by the most basic principles of their faith committed to absolute non-violence, and any charge that there might have been weapons or ‘live rounds’ in their homes is simply and completely unbelievable.

“Without doubt, these are baseless fabrications devised by the government to further create an atmosphere of prejudice and hatred against the Iranian Baha'i community. For more than a century Bahá'ís have suffered all manner of persecution in Iran and have not resorted to armed violence, and everyone knows this. Unfortunately, the Iranian government is once again resorting to outright falsehoods to justify its nefarious intentions against the Bahá'í community. It should know that these lies will have no credibility whatsoever.

“We are particularly concerned by the fact that these accusations come just days before the scheduled trial of seven Baha'i leaders, who have been locked up for nearly two years on equally unfounded charges,” she said.

“All of these latest accusations are so far-fetched as to be ludicrous if they were not so obviously aimed at putting innocent lives at risk,” she said. “As we have said before, rather than accepting responsibility for the turmoil in the country, the Iranian government seeks to lay the blame on others, including foreign powers, international organizations and media outlets, students, women, and terrorists.”

On Friday, several news agencies reported that Tehran's general prosecutor, Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi, said the Baha'is who were arrested on Sunday "were arrested because they played a role in organizing the Ashura protests and namely for having sent abroad pictures of the unrest."

"They were not arrested because they are Baha'is," said Mr. Dolatabadi, according to Agence France Presse. "Arms and ammunition were seized in the homes of some of them."

Ms. Ala'i also rejected Mr. Dolatabadi's assertions that Baha'is were involved in the planning of the Ashura demonstrations, or in any violent or subversive activity related to the recent turmoil in Iran.

"For the past 30 years, Iranian Baha'is have subjected to the worst forms of persecution, ranging from arbitrary execution to the exclusion of their children from school," said Ms. Ala'i. "Yet they have responded only through means that are peaceful and legal."

Seven Baha'is leaders are scheduled to go on trial on Tuesday on trumped-up charges of espionage, "insulting religious sanctities," and "propaganda" against the government. They have been held in Evin prison since mid-2008. The seven are Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm.

On Sunday, 13 Baha'is were arrested in early morning raids on their homes in Tehran. Three have been released but ten remain detained at Evin prison.

They are: Leva Khanjani, granddaughter of Jamaloddin Khanjani; and her husband, Babak Mobasher, Jinous Sobhani, former secretary of Mrs. Shirin Ebadi, and her husband Artin Ghazanfari; Mehran Rowhani and Farid Rowhani, who are brothers; Payam Fanaian; Nikav Hoveydaie, and Ebrahim Shadmehr and his son, Zavosh Shadmehr.