

PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

16 September 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

Prison sentences for Iran's Baha'i leaders reportedly reduced to 10 years

NEW YORK – The 20-year prison sentences received by Iran's seven Baha'i leaders have reportedly been reduced.

The Baha'i International Community has learned that the lawyers representing the seven were informed orally yesterday that the 20-year jail terms have now been reduced to 10 years.

The seven -- Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rezaie, Mahvash Sabet, Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Vahid Tizfahm -- were all members of a national-level group that, with the Iranian government's knowledge, helped see to the minimum spiritual needs of Iran's 300,000-strong Baha'i community.

The trial of the seven consisted of six brief court appearances which began on 12 January this year after they had been incarcerated without charge for 20 months. They were allowed barely one hour's access to their legal counsel during that time. The trial ended on 14 June.

The defendants were accused of propaganda activities against the Islamic order and the establishment of an illegal administration, among other allegations. All the charges were completely and categorically denied.

The seven were moved from Evin Prison after receiving their sentence to Gohardasht prison in Karaj.

Reports of the 20-year sentence provoked a chorus of condemnation from governments around the world -- including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S.A. The European Union and the President of the European Parliament also joined the protest, along with numerous human rights organizations, other groups and countless individuals.

- end -

For more information, go to <http://news.bahai.org>