

Situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran with regard to religious discrimination and denying access to employment and higher education

(May 2016)

We submit the following report about the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran as it relates to the International Labour Organization's Convention No.111 on Discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, to which Iran is a signatory. To our knowledge, no other ILO Conventions pertain to human rights abuses that specifically target members of the Bahá'í community with regard to issues under the organization's mandate.¹

We note that Article 1 of ILO Convention No.111 defines discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.” In addition, it stipulates that “the terms employment and occupation include access to vocational training, access to employment and to particular occupations, and terms and conditions of employment.”

Introduction

For almost four decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has waged a widespread and systematic campaign of persecution against the country's Bahá'í religious minority. This persecution has impacted the lives of generations, from young infants to frail elderly. Iranian law and official policy denies Bahá'ís their civil, political, economic and cultural rights to education, work, freedom of religion, freedom from arbitrary detention and others. Since the early 1980s, over 200 Bahá'ís have been executed or murdered, thousands arrested, detained and interrogated, and tens of thousands more deprived of jobs, pensions and educational opportunities — all solely because their religion is declared to be a “heretical sect.”

¹ It should be noted that the persecution against Iran's Bahá'ís includes recurrent violations of a wide range of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Recent developments are regularly reported online at: <http://news.bahai.org/human-rights/iran/iran-update/>, and additional information can be found at: <https://www.bic.org/what-we-do/27>. For in-depth background and photos, the publication “*Their Progress and Development Are Blocked*”, *The economic oppression of Iran's Bahá'ís*, dated 19 October 2015 can be downloaded at: <https://www.bic.org/publications/their-progress-and-development-are-blocked#bHXWglwReqs7wEYm.97> or obtained in a bound edition from Bahá'í International Community representatives.

Since 2005, more than 820 Bahá'ís have been arrested, and the number of Bahá'ís in prison has risen from fewer than five to more than 80, as of January 2016.

Overall, there has been a continuation of the government's official policy of discrimination and persecution against Bahá'ís, marked by revolving door arrests, the denial of access to higher education, and a government campaign of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in the media. Government actions have been accompanied by numerous attacks by anonymous individuals on Bahá'ís and their properties, including arson attacks, anti-Bahá'í graffiti, and the desecration of Bahá'í cemeteries.

The economic suffocation of the Bahá'í community is a matter of official state policy. It has been systematic and wide-ranging, and has been the result of the government's effort to block Bahá'ís from earning a decent livelihood for themselves and their families. This policy is confirmed in a 1991 Iranian government memorandum² obtained by the then UN Special Representative on Iran in 1993. Prepared by Iran's Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and approved by the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, this document, concerning "The Bahá'í Question", sets forth specific guidelines for dealing with the Bahá'ís. Stamped "confidential", the memorandum was signed by Hujjatu'l Islam Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani, Secretary of the Council, and approved by Mr. Khamenei, who added his signature to the document. The memorandum specifically calls for Iran's Bahá'ís to be treated so "that their progress and development shall be blocked." The 1991 memorandum outlines a series of repressive measures to be taken against Bahá'ís to "block" their development, including restrictions on education and economic activity, such as: "Deny them employment if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís." Its provisions, still in effect today, also include instructions that students "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."

Bahá'ís are non-violent and non-partisan, and pose no threat to the government. Their only wish – besides being able to practice their religion freely – is to contribute to the development and prosperity of their country. This insidious exclusion of Bahá'ís from the economic life of the nation extends to all levels of the country's economic structure and is embedded in the government's policy by the 1991 memorandum, whose instructions continue to be implemented throughout the country. Tens of thousands of Bahá'ís have been deprived of jobs, pensions, business and educational opportunities. A truth that we are documenting in this report, but that is systematically denied by the representatives of the Iranian government at the ILO. As you will surely recall, in its latest report (2015), the ILO Committee of Experts noted "that the situation of non-recognized religious minorities,

² The text of the 1991 government memorandum can be accessed through the following links:
 Persian original: http://news.bahai.org/documentlibrary/575/5_TheSRCCdocument.pdf
 English translation: http://news.bahai.org/documentlibrary/575/5_TheSRCCdocument_en.pdf

in particular the Bahá'ís, remains sensitive, including the societal attitude towards members of this group".³

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Bahá'ís are banned from all public sector jobs, from any government employment, including in education, health care, or government institutions. Bahá'í-owned factories and shops are sealed because their owners ceased to work in observance of Bahá'í holy days, and efforts are made to persuade Muslim-owned businesses in the private sector to fire their Bahá'í employees. By one estimate, more than 10,000 Bahá'ís lost their jobs, pensions or property under this policy. As of 2007, at least 780 incidents of direct economic persecution against Iranian Bahá'ís have been documented by the Bahá'í International Community. This figure is undoubtedly higher, given the difficulty of getting accurate information about human rights violations from Iran.

A key element of this overall economic suppression has been the effort to deny young Bahá'ís access to higher education. Thousands of young Bahá'ís have, year after year, been barred from attending university or college in Iran. When the Bahá'í community created its own ad hoc Bahá'í Institute of Higher Education (BIHE) to respond to the educational needs of young Bahá'ís, the government repeatedly sought to shut it down with raids and arrests. In 2011, for example, 17 volunteer teachers and administrators of the BIHE were arrested and sentenced to prison terms ranging from four to five years.

The government has, moreover, fueled hatred against Bahá'ís through a relentless campaign in the media. Attacks on Bahá'í businesses have come amid a government-sponsored campaign to incite hatred against Bahá'ís, marked by numerous anti-Bahá'í articles or broadcasts in state-run or state-affiliated media. Since President Hassan Rouhani took office in August 2013, there have been more than 7,000 articles, videos, or webpages appearing in government-controlled or government-sponsored media featuring anti-Bahá'í propaganda. In all cases, the disseminations were sponsored and/or approved by the State. Since January 2015, over 60 influential figures, including clerics, religious figures, academics, editors and government representatives have publicly issued speeches, articles or written declarations against the Bahá'ís. Such statements have been published on websites of various media organizations affiliated with the Iranian government which regularly attack the Bahá'ís.

This report focuses on recent aspects of Iran's policy aimed at closing those few avenues for economic livelihood that remain open to Bahá'ís, which have resulted in numerous cases of shop closings, dismissals, the actual or threatened revocation of business licenses, and other efforts to suppress the economic activity of Bahá'ís. It covers events occurring over the past months, when, despite promises to the contrary, the economic pressures facing Bahá'ís have not abated and the barriers erected towards their free and unfettered engagement in the economic life of the nation have not been removed. We will not be providing here the names of victims of human rights abuses for their own security; notwithstanding this, all cases mentioned in this report have been fully documented in submissions to the relevant UN Special Procedures and agencies.

³ The full text is available at: [http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09661/09661\(2015-104-1A\).pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09661/09661(2015-104-1A).pdf).

Denial of employment, pensions and other rights

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran ensures “conditions and opportunities of employment for everyone”, and in Article 43, regarding the economy, it prohibits “the infliction of harm and loss upon others”. However, in thousands of cases, officials have taken measures to make it impossible for those who are known to be Bahá’ís to earn a living.

Official documents prove that these abuses are government policy. In particular, a letter from the Public Places Supervision Office (dated 9 April 2007) ordered commanders of police and heads of intelligence and security to prevent members of the “perverse Bahaist sect” (as well as members of “anti-revolutionary political organizations” and other illegal groups) from engaging in certain occupations. The orders stipulated that Bahá’ís must be denied work permits and licences for over 25 kinds of business, specifically listed, and barred from all other “high-earning businesses”.⁴ The 25 trades included many independent businesses and shops that Bahá’ís have opened over the years throughout Iran because this was the only way they could earn a living. Members of the community have long been banned from employment in the public sector, and many have been refused or fired from private sector jobs once their religious affiliation became known.

A wide range of measures are being used to discriminate against Bahá’ís. In 2006 trade associations, unions and business organizations had been instructed to compile lists of Bahá’ís in every type of employment. Identification was followed by action, involving an untold number of officials who:

- refused to issue or renew business licenses, work permits and/or trade membership cards to Bahá’ís.
- issued instructions to chain stores, government offices and other organizations to avoid purchasing from or to stop all business dealings with companies and independents because the owners or managers were Bahá’ís
- incited the population to shun Bahá’í-owned businesses
- instructed landlords of stores to refuse lease renewals to Bahá’í tenant shopkeepers
- banned Bahá’ís who were working independently from continuing their activities
- warned private-sector employers against hiring members of the community and/or harassed them to dismiss Bahá’í employees, threatening them with closure of their business if they did not do so (some were shut down; others banned from advertising, etc.)
- conducted unexpected inspection visits to workplaces, summoning and interrogating Bahá’ís, or raiding and even vandalizing some Bahá’í-owned stores
- closed many Bahá’í-owned businesses, sealing the premises.

⁴ A copy of this 2007 letter (in Persian original and English translation) is on pages 86-87 of Bahá’í International Community, *The Bahá’í Question – Cultural Cleansing in Iran*, September 2008, (pgs 86-87) available at <http://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/TheBahaiQuestion.pdf>.

In addition, banks have refused to proceed with loan approvals for and/or frozen the assets in accounts belonging to Bahá'ís. Business licenses and banking services are vital – as mentioned above, many Bahá'ís in Iran have launched private enterprises over the years because they and other members of the community could not obtain employment. Some of those deprived of their rightfully earned pensions have attempted to pursue legal remedies, but the courts systematically rule against them. Copies of court decisions in such cases explicitly state: “payment of pension to those individuals connected with the Bahá'í sect is illegal” [or an “unlawful act”].

Bahá'í farmers are also affected. Agricultural land owned by members of the community has been confiscated. For example, just over two years ago, the fraudulent seizure of land from two Bahá'ís in Lavdar village (Semnan) was endorsed by the courts, despite the objection of the Muslim gentleman who had been a tenant farmer on the land for many years. There have also been targeted attacks, with trees uprooted in Bahá'í-owned orchards, crops destroyed and Bahá'í farms forced to shut down.

Iranian authorities have greatly intensified their discriminatory policies and practices to deny members of the Bahá'í community the right to work and earn a decent living. Authorities throughout the country continue to use harassment, intimidation and false accusations to shut down or impede the activities of tens of Bahá'í-owned businesses. The homes and work places of Bahá'ís are frequently searched and raided, and their owners summoned and interrogated. The following represent only the most recent cases:

- The business premises of a Bahá'í who buys and sells printers and photocopiers in Tehran, was sealed by the authorities in 2012/13 and reopened again. Since then, he has twice been summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence Office and told to stop working immediately. When the Bahá'í insisted that he has made commitments to people, he was given a two months' extension. The agent interviewing him said that “[a]fter the two months, I will put together a case against you that will send you to be with your friends [in prison] for at least four to five years, and will keep you away from your wife and children”. When the Bahá'í asked how he should earn a livelihood, it was suggested that he should get into construction business or work for an agency.
- On 13 February 2016, agents from the Ministry of Intelligence office sealed the business premises of a Bahá'í-owned company in Shiraz which imports electronic goods.
- The optical store of a Bahá'í in Oroumiyeh was sealed by the Amaken, the Public Places Supervision Office.⁵ The director of the opticians' union in Oroumiyeh has told the Bahá'í that, as the Bahá'ís in the optical trade are extensively active and in contact with Israel, all their business licences will be revoked by next year.

⁵ Reportedly responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in places of work and other offices.

- On 20 April 2016, 15 shops belonging to Bahá'ís in Ghaemshahr, and 2 shops in Babol were sealed. On 28 April 2016, 1 shop in Babolsar and 3 shops in Tonekabon were sealed for closing their shops on the Bahá'í holy days.
- It was reported in April 2016, that the businesses of multiple Bahá'ís in Hamadan have been sealed for the last 41 months. One Bahá'í had taken steps to reopen his business; in response, all the officials urged him to give an undertaking to keep open his shop during the Bahá'í holy days, and told him that unless he gives such an undertaking he would be prevented from re-opening his business. The Bahá'ís affected by this injustice are now pursuing their complaints, approaching, for example, the Office of the President, the Head of the Parliament, the Head of the Judiciary, the Ministry of the Interior, and other relevant offices.
- Since 2014, incidents occurring in the Mazandaran and Kerman provinces, are an indication of systematic and coordinated plans to impose further economic restrictions on the Bahá'ís:

In November 2014, agents of the Amaken in Kerman sealed 80 shops of the Bahá'ís in Kerman, Rafsanjan and Jiroft, under the pretext that the shops had been closed during the Bahá'í holy days. On 1 January 2015, after 67 days of extensive follow-up activities and the filing of complaints by the Bahá'ís, the shops began to be gradually reopened. Unfortunately, on 21 April 2015 — a Bahá'í holy day — the Office of Amaken again sealed a number of shops in Rafsanjan and Sari. A further eleven shops in Rafsanjan, seven shops in Kerman and six shops in Sari were sealed on 29 April 2015 — another Bahá'í holy day. The shop closures continued on 24 May 2015, when agents of the Amaken sealed 12 shops of the Bahá'ís in Sari because they were closed for a holy day. The Ministry of Intelligence Office in Kerman summoned some of the shop-owners and asked them to sign undertakings to not close their shops on Bahá'í holy days, which they refused. Since May 2015 the shop owners have persisted in their follow-up activities regarding the closure of their shops with no avail, and met with or wrote to many authorities. On 6 August 2015, three more Bahá'í-owned shops in Kerman were sealed by order of the Amaken, while many of the shops have been closed since 2014.

- On 15 November 2015, Intelligence agents raided the houses and workplaces of many Bahá'ís in various cities, and arrested 20 individuals. In Tonekabon, four shops were closed.
- Since January 2016, the Bahá'ís in Kerman and Rafsanjan whose shops have been closed have continued to make efforts to seek justice in regard to the reopening of their businesses. Representatives of the business owners have gone to government departments and agencies, visited the trade officials, met with lawyers and with officials in the parliamentary and judicial offices in Tehran. They were met with an unsupportive attitude and were encouraged to sign an undertaking form if they wished to reopen their businesses. Fourteen non-Bahá'í business owners in Kerman drafted an affidavit addressed to the Amaken of Kerman in support of a Bahá'í, whose store had been sealed

in October 2014. The Bahá'í shop owners have been continuing to attempt to persuade the authorities to permit their shops to be reopened.

Bahá'ís are being prevented from being promoted in certain types of professions and have been denied membership or presidency in their related trade, membership in syndicates and trade unions, participation in exhibitions, becoming well-known exporters or importers, or major distributors of any goods. The following represents only the most recent case:

- A Bahá'í has been a member of the Photographers' Union of Isfahan for the last five to six years and was appointed to serve in a position of some importance. It was reported in March 2016 that the chairman of the board of directors of the Photographers' Union gave him the task of taking the photographs at the "International Conference of Abrahamic Religions" in Isfahan. This conference was attended by Ministers and Advisors to President Rouhani. A few days after the event, the Bahá'í was summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence Office, interrogated, and forced to resign both his position in and membership of the Union.

Denial of access to higher education, including vocational training

As mentioned earlier, adherents of the Bahá'í Faith have long been denied access to higher education. Every year, hundreds of qualified young Bahá'ís are prevented from entering public and private universities and vocational training institutes in Iran.

- In 2004–2005, the government responded to international pressure by re-interpreting an entry on an official form so as to allow Bahá'ís to take the national university entrance exam without declaring their religion. But nearly all those who passed the entrance exams were blocked during the enrolment phase or expelled later, when it became known that they are members of the Bahá'í community. All the expelled students who appealed to relevant authorities, and/or through the courts, had their cases rejected.
- In 2006–2007, over 800 Bahá'ís took the university entrance exam and 480 passed; 289 were admitted. Those admitted have since been identified as Bahá'ís and expelled, some during their final semester, just before graduation.
- In 2007–2008, more than 1,000 Bahá'ís took the exam, approximately 800 were informed that their papers would not be graded because their file was considered an "incomplete file". None who followed up on this false classification obtained recourse. 121 were admitted; however, they have since been identified as Bahá'ís and expelled.
- In 2008–2009, entrance exam results were available on only one website, where all those previously identified as Bahá'ís (at school or elsewhere) were transferred to a page containing the message: "Error: 'Incomplete File...".⁶ None of them were able to enrol.

⁶ Note the final letters: http://82.99.202.139/karsarasari/87/index.php?msg=error_bah.

The government has done nothing to negate these instructions, which have been implemented throughout the country. University enrolment forms include declarations of religion, and many officials do not allow these to be left blank. Even during the academic year, university authorities have summoned students and demanded that they identify their religion. Whenever a student was identified as a Bahá'í, he or she was expelled. The few students admitted without their religious affiliation being identified at the outset were later expelled from university when it was discovered that they were Bahá'ís. Many have appealed such cases—an approach that, to date, has proved unavailing.

Several official documents provide evidence that the expulsion of Bahá'í students constitutes formal government policy. Chief among these is a communication sent in 2006 by the Central Security Office of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. Addressed to 81 Iranian universities (the names of which were listed), it instructed them to expel any student discovered to be a Bahá'í at the time of enrolment or during his/her studies.⁷ The communication also indicated that these instructions were being promulgated under “decree number 1327/M/S, dated 6/12/69 [25 February 1991]”. This referenced decree is the 1991 memorandum from the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council, which was discussed above. The 1991 memorandum was also cited in an implementation letter from the Central Security Office of Payame Noor University to its regional branches in November 2006. A related letter in March 2007 mandated instructions “to prevent the enrolment of the Bahá'í applicants”.⁸ To this day, the 1991 memorandum is referred to as a justification of dismissal of Bahá'í students from university.

Furthermore, the government's denial of higher education to Bahá'ís is officially recorded in a publication issued by Sanjesh, the national academic evaluation and measurement organization of Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. Entitled, “*A guide to enrolling and participating in the national entrance examination for academic year 1394 [2015–2016]*”, this 50-page publication presents detailed guidelines on the application process for students wishing to enter university in Iran, including criteria for admission. The first admission criterion of the publication by Sanjesh states as follows on page 4 under the heading ‘General Requirements’:

“A belief in Islam or in one of the recognized religions (Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian) in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran”.

This requirement of Iran's own official admission document clearly states that access to higher education in Iran is restricted only to those who believe in Islam or in one of the three other recognized religions specified in Iran's Constitution – thus excluding those who believe in the Bahá'í Faith.

⁷ The 2006 letter to universities can be accessed at:

Persian: http://news.bahai.org/documentlibrary/575/1_LetterFromMinistriesToUniversities.pdf

English: http://news.bahai.org/documentlibrary/575/1_LetterFromMinistriesToUniversities_en.pdf

⁸ For the March 2007 letter, see:

Persian: http://news.bahai.org/documentlibrary/575/2_LetterToPayam-i-NurUniversity.pdf

English: http://news.bahai.org/documentlibrary/575/2_LetterToPayam-i-NurUniversity_en.pdf

Although Islamic teachings and Article 23 of the Iranian Constitution strongly forbid the investigation of individuals' beliefs, it is clear that Bahá'ís are denied their fundamental rights solely because they are identified as such. Most Bahá'ís are identified early in the university application process and are not even permitted to complete the procedure.

In the previous years, for example, Bahá'ís were told that their files were "incomplete" when they tried to get university entrance examinations results. When Bahá'í students sought their exam results online, many found the following written in front of their names:

“Please write to Post Office Box 3166- 31635 Karaj, or go to the National Education Measurement and Evaluation Organization, Inquiries Unit.”

Several of them visited the above-referenced office in Karaj and made inquiries; they were all shown the Sanjesh publication.

During the 2014–2015 academic year, 300 cases of denial to higher education were reported. Bahá'í youth continue to be denied access to higher education in any form and from any source in Iran. This year, hundreds of Bahá'í students are denied enrolment to universities under the pretext of “incomplete file”. These individuals participate in the national examination and receive high scores, making them eligible for entry into university and yet they are denied the right to education only because they are Bahá'ís. A considerable number of Bahá'í youth who scored high grades in the national examination were either denied entry into university or were expelled during the academic year once it was identified that they are Bahá'ís. Below are some recent examples:

- It was reported in March 2016 two Bahá'í students were recently expelled from Sari University.
- It was reported in April 2016 that three Bahá'í students, one of whom was in term five of literature and another in term five of electrical engineering, were recently expelled from Payame Noor University in Oroumiyeh.
- Two Bahá'í students of Applied Sciences at the Institute of Bisotoun in Kernmanshah, were expelled from university. Following these expulsions, their families went to the head of the university, the person in charge of university's security office and other university officials and requested clarification of the matter. The officials refused to produce any sort of written response, or to provide any document related to the expulsions. They initially refrained from even recording their receipt of the letter of complaint. However, after ceaseless efforts made, some of their letters were finally recorded at the secretariat of the university. The head of Security Office provided an opportunity for the students to say goodbye to their classmates and lecturers. In these meetings, all the students and lecturers expressed their sadness about what had occurred.

- A Bahá'í student in Kermanshah received a notification stating that her examination file was “incomplete”. Her father—who has also been deprived of access to higher education for the past 32 years—filed a complaint with the Court of Administrative Justice against the Ministry of Education. The complaint requested the removal of subparagraph “a” of paragraph 1 in the general conditions booklet for candidates of the National University Entrance Examination, stating that a belief in Islam or in one of the recognized religions (Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian) in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is necessary to enroll. In its decision delivered on 4 February 2015, the court dismissed the case. However, the head of the Bar Association of Kermanshah Commission on Human Rights, handed the father a letter addressed to the President, signed by 45 human rights lawyers in support of a Bahá'í youth who has been deprived of education.

In October 2015 the father and daughter delivered their complaint and filed a petition concerning the denial of their access to higher education to the Court of Administrative Justice. A letter was found that had been written by the legal representative of the Sanjesh, which explicitly mentioned that the expulsion of the Bahá'í was based on the ruling of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, the letter indicated that the reason for her expulsion was her membership in “fabricated sects”. According to the Judiciary’s website, the legal appeal in this case against the Educational Measurement and Evaluation Organization is scheduled to be heard on 13 March 2017.

Finally, we would add that shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, all Bahá'í students enrolled at the time were expelled from university, and Bahá'í university professors and lecturers were summarily dismissed from their positions. In the late 1980s, the Bahá'í community made informal arrangements to begin offering university-level courses and vocational training to Bahá'í students, conducted through distance learning and in the privacy of Bahá'í homes, using the volunteer services of the Bahá'í professors who had been fired from their jobs. The Iranian government made repeated attempts to stop this quiet, peaceful initiative known as the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE), most notably in 1998, 2001, 2003 and 2011.

Since May 2011, we have been documenting cases that concern educators and students arrested because of their participation in the work of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE). At the time of the concerted attack against faculty and staff in 2011, nearly 300 people were serving the Institute, including international volunteer educators who teach through the Internet. About 1,000 BIHE students were studying at home and in inconspicuous laboratories in privately owned premises. Seven individuals are currently serving prison terms ranging from four to five years, solely because they had been providing courses to young Bahá'ís with the capacity and deep desire to continue their studies beyond secondary school. Educators, administrators or collaborators, these seven individuals have volunteered their time and skills to help young Bahá'ís with the advancement of their country.

In the case of the Bahá'ís, rather than intensifying opportunities for access to higher education as was recommended, Iran has intensified its efforts to deny higher education to students and considers the act of educating young people a criminal offence.

Many of the Bahá'ís involved in the concerted attack in 2011 have been repeatedly harassed. The following represents only the most recent case:

- A Bahá'í couple was waiting to serve their respective five and four year sentences under *ta'zir* law.⁹ One of the charges against them was “activities against national security through membership in BIHE”. In April 2015 the wife was summoned by telephone to serve her sentence, and on 5 May 2015, a hearing was held for the husband in the court of appeals. On Sunday 28 February 2016, the father was arrested by the authorities when he went to Evin prison to visit his wife and was taken into prison to start his five-year sentence. This arrest took place without any summons having been issued or warning given. By prior arrangement, the couple's only child, a six-year-old son is being cared for by a Bahá'í family in Karaj. The couple were both volunteer lecturers for the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) and their home was raided on 22 May 2011 by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence. The wife was also one of the 17 Bahá'ís who were arrested in a mass raid on the 39 residences of people associated with BIHE on 22 May 2011.

⁹ [*Ta'zir* (discretionary punishment): Punishment with maximum and minimum limits determined by law and judge, respectively.]