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PRESS RELEASE

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Baha'i Prisoners Face Harsher Conditions

GENEVA – In a harsh move by the prison authorities in Karaj, Iran, a number of inmates in Gohardasht Prison, including over fifteen Baha'is, have been moved to a new section of the prison with difficult conditions and heightened security measures.

Reports indicate that, on 29 July 2017, prison authorities transferred individuals held in one of the sections of the Gohardasht Prison to a newly-built section, equipped with added security features including surveillance cameras and microphones even in toilets and showers.

The move was enforced without prior notice and prisoners were not allowed to take their personal belongings, even essential items such as medicine and clothes.

Family visits were initially halted after the transfer, and news of the worsening conditions of the prisoners, some of whom suffer from illnesses, have caused alarm.

“This latest development in Gohardasht Prison is deeply troubling,” explained Ms. Diane Ala'i, Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations Office in Geneva. “Not only are these Baha'is unjustly imprisoned because of their beliefs, they are now also subjected to added pressures and ill treatment without any justification but also in contradiction with Iran's own laws.”

According to Iranian law, prisoners may be transferred from one section of a prison to another but they must be informed in advance. Prisoner transfers are generally done in order to improve their conditions.

“We call on the relevant authorities to urgently look into this matter and put an end to this harsh treatment and ensure standard living conditions in the prison,” said Ms. Ala'i.

There are currently approximately 95 Baha'is in prison in Iran. They have all been arrested solely because of their religious beliefs.

For more information, go to www.bic.org