

“counter the
propaganda and
religious activities of
Bahá’ís.”

"Deny them any position of influence"

"their progress
and development
are blocked."

A resource guide on the persecution of Iran's Bahá'í Community
Bahá'í International Community
October 2023

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."

شماره ۱۳۲۷
تاریخ ۱۹/۱۲/۶۰
پروست

جمهوری اسلامی ایران
شماره ۱۳۲۷
تاریخ ۱۹/۱۲/۶۰
پروست

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

"Deny them any position of influence"

سلام علیکم
بمدافعان حقیقت و عطف بر نهاده شماره ۱۳۷۸۲ س مورخ ۱۰/۱۰/۶۰ دائره به ابلاغ اواس مقام
معلم رهبری به ریاست محترم جمهوری و رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی موضوع جهت طرح
حکم فرجام ریاست محترم جمهوری و رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی موضوع جهت طرح
و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۶۰ و ۱۱/۱۱/۶۰ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۶۰ شورای عالی انقلاب
فرهنگی قرار گرفت و در نتیجه مذاکرات و رتبه‌بندی که در جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۶۰ شورای عالی انقلاب
فرهنگی به ریاست مقام معلم رهبری (رئیس و عضو شورای عالی) در این خصوص به‌مناسبت
آئین بود، مذاکرات و اواخر اخیر مقام معلم رهبری در رابطه با مسائل بهائیان به اطلاع
شورای عالی رسید و با عنایت به نظام قانون اساسی جمهوری اسلامی ایران و مسائل شرعی و
ماترین و سیاست‌های عمومی کشور، مورد مذاکره و مذاقه و اعلام نظر واقع گردید و در راستای
تجهیز و پیشنهادت‌شده صحیح و مستوفی در سرخورد با مسائل مذکور، و با عطف توجه خاص به
اواس مقام معلم ایشان جمهوری اسلامی ایران دائره پرانکه "در این رابطه سیاست
گذاری دوستی شود تا همه به‌همین چه گرایید بشود یافت شود" ما حاصل مذاکرات و پیشنهادات
پس طرح و بررسی‌های مذکور به ریاست محترم جمهوری و رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی ضمن
مسابقه دانشن کهچه 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- بدون جهت آنان از مملکت اخراج نمی‌شوند
- ۲- به دلیل آنان دستگیر و زندانی و با مجازات نمی‌شوند
- ۳- به غیر از نظام با آنان باید دینی باشد که راه قرنی و توسعه آنان مسدود نشود.

ب: جایگاه فرهنگی

- ۱- در مدارس چنانچه اظهار کردند بهائیانند ثبت نام شوند
- ۲- حتی‌الامکان در مدارس که کادر دینی و مسلط بر مسائل عقیدتی دارند ثبت نام شوند

"they must be expelled from universities"

"their progress and development are blocked."

The Bahá'í Question: Persecution and Resilience in Iran

A resource guide on the persecution of Iran's Bahá'í Community
Bahá'í International Community
October 2023

The Bahá'í Question: Persecution and Resilience in Iran
A document prepared by the Bahá'í International Community
October 2023

The Bahá'í International Community
United Nations Office
866 United Nations Plaza
Suite 120
New York, NY, USA 10017

www.bic.org

© The Bahá'í International Community
All photographs copyright the Bahá'í International Community unless otherwise noted
All rights reserved

Executive Summary

For 44 years, since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Bahá'í community, the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority, has faced severe persecution.

The Bahá'ís have been subject to the taking of their lives, their land, and homes. They have been denied their right to education, denied livelihoods, denied their right to live in a society free from hateful propaganda or the danger of violence, and denied the right to be buried in dignity.

All because the Iranian government, judiciary, and security institutions have pursued a campaign of religious prejudice against the Bahá'ís that seeks to eradicate the Bahá'í community as a viable entity in the country of its birth.

Over 200 Bahá'ís were executed after 1979 and a systematic campaign was launched to hinder the progress and development of the community. Bahá'ís have endured arrests on false charges, imprisonment, denial of higher education and economic opportunities, and persistent harassment and hate speech.

The Bahá'í Question: Persecution and Resilience in Iran explores the historical religious motives behind the persecution, the legal and practical methods employed by the Iranian government, the response of the Bahá'ís, and how the international community can support the Bahá'í community in Iran.

The Bahá'í community emerged in Iran in the mid-1800s, promoting the unity of humanity, gender equality, and the harmonious coexistence of religion and science. Today, Bahá'ís from diverse backgrounds reside in nearly every country, striving to contribute to the betterment of society.

But the Iranian government, even though it is bound by international law to protect all citizens, has consistently violated its obligations. The Bahá'í teachings, calling for spiritual renewal and gaining popularity among Iranians, are seen as a direct threat to the country's religious orthodoxy. The Islamic Republic has therefore engaged in violent and dehumanizing acts to uproot the Bahá'í community.

Iranian authorities claim that Bahá'ís have full citizenship rights—claims which are refuted by extensive evidence. The following pages detail

repeated incidents of persecution and link these to Iranian government documents that detail exactly how, when, and where the Bahá'ís should be suppressed by the state.

Despite enduring a century of persecution, Iranian Bahá'ís have refused to respond with violence and outrage. The Bahá'ís have instead focused on contributing to Iranian society through social and economic development initiatives aimed at assisting their fellow citizens, while also meeting their own educational and social needs through a peaceful form of “constructive resilience” that neither takes on the character of the oppressor nor falls into apathy.

For decades, human rights reports presented to the highest United Nations bodies have highlighted the systematic and escalating persecution faced by Iran's Bahá'í citizens. Iran's Bahá'í community relies on ongoing support from UN bodies and Member States, as well as national governments issuing declarations and statements of concern, diplomatic pressure exerted on Iranian leadership, and media campaigns that bring attention to and expose the persecution of Bahá'ís.

The international community must maintain unwavering pressure, using both multilateral and bilateral channels, to call on the Iranian government to cease its persecution, revoke discriminatory policies, and reform laws to ensure full citizenship rights for Bahá'ís.

Contents

Introduction: The persecution of Iran’s Bahá’í community 1

In the years after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian government executed more than 200 Bahá’ís, members of the country’s largest non-Muslim religious minority, before pivoting to a systematic policy to block the progress and development of the entire Bahá’í community. Bahá’ís are arrested on false charges, jailed, denied higher education and many forms of economic livelihood, and subjected to constant harassment and hate speech.

State-sponsored persecution.....2

Systematic and sustained persecution3

Targeting women, children, and young people3

Denial of education4

Hate speech, propaganda, and stigmatization campaigns4

Economic oppression and denial of livelihoods5

Arbitrary confiscation and destruction of property5

Arbitrary imprisonment of well-known Bahá’ís just for practicing their religion5

Who are the Bahá’ís? 8

The Bahá’í community emerged in Iran in the mid-1800s with the belief that all humanity is one, that women and men are equal, and that religion and science must be the twin guiding lights for the progress of an ever-advancing civilization. Bahá’ís of every national, ethnic, and religious background now live in almost every country of the world, where they strive to serve their societies for the betterment of all.

History and contributions 9

Working for social change in Iran 12

Why does the Iranian government persecute the Bahá’ís?..... 15

Iran’s government is bound by international law to protect every citizen. Why does it continue to blatantly violate the terms of its obligations? The spiritual renewal called for by the Bahá’í teachings, and the Faith’s growing appeal to the Iranian populace, have, since its inception, represented a direct threat to Iranian religious orthodoxy. The Islamic Republic has therefore systematically sought to root out this community of adherents—often in violent and dehumanizing ways.

Roots of the persecution 18

Brutal killings and then a shift in tactics: 1979 and beyond21

Iran’s obligations under international law23

How does the Iranian government persecute the Bahá'ís?.....24

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 have been arrested, imprisoned, assaulted, discriminated against economically, and expelled or blocked from university, but also by official documents that spell out a national policy designed to prevent the development of the Bahá'í community at every turn.

Persecution through Iranian law and government documents	25
Surveillance, identification, and monitoring	29
Executions	31
Detentions and imprisonments	34
Property violations: raids, seizures, and destruction	45
Demolition of Bahá'í holy places and cemeteries	50
Economic strangulation	58
Denial of education	65
Hate speech and propaganda	70

How do Iranians (Bahá'ís and others) respond to the persecution?83

With over a century of persecution, and an intense, cruel, and unrelenting campaign of mistreatment directed by the Iranian government over the last four decades, the Bahá'ís have seen their leadership decimated; their friends and relatives harassed and imprisoned; their holy sites and cemeteries confiscated, desecrated, and destroyed; their economic life disrupted; and their young people blocked from educational advancement. Yet the Bahá'ís have responded, not with violence and outrage, but with efforts to contribute to Iranian society, including social and economic development projects aimed at helping their fellow Iranian citizens.

Constructive resilience	84
A wave of support from fellow Iranians.....	90

How can the international community support the Bahá'ís?94

Iran's Bahá'í community needs the continued support of United Nations bodies and Member States, including declarations and statements of concern from national governments, pressure from governments on the Iranian leadership, and media campaigns to publicize and expose the persecution of the Bahá'ís.

United Nations human rights mechanisms.....	95
National statements and actions	101
Media campaigns	102

What should happen next? A call to action 109

For decades, reports issued by human rights mechanisms, and heard by the UN's highest bodies, have warned of the systematic and worsening persecution of Iran's Bahá'í citizens. The international community must continue to apply unwavering pressure, while using bilateral relationships, to press the Iranian government to relent in its persecution, rescind its policies against the Bahá'ís, and reform its laws so that Bahá'ís enjoy all citizenship rights.

Archives of Bahá'í Persecution 112

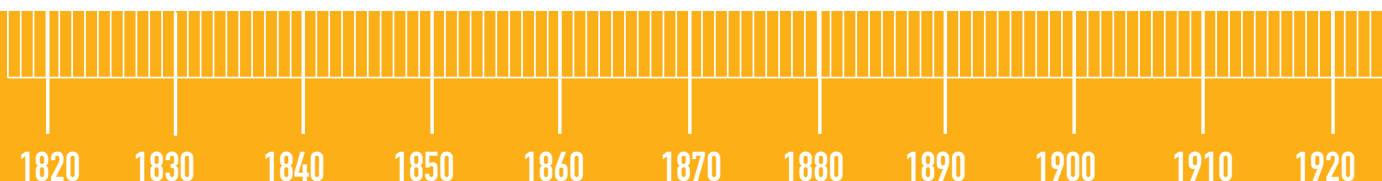
The Bahá'í International Community established the Archives of Bahá'í Persecution to record the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran in response to rising interest internationally and within Iran to understand the depth and breadth of this persecution. The documents shed light on the decades-long, systematic, and ongoing persecution of the Bahá'ís, instigated by the clergy and by the government. Visit the Archives at iranbahaipersecution.bic.org on the web.

Annexes 113

Dozens of Iranian government documents have emerged over the years, starting with the seminal 1991 policy document "The Bahá'í Question," signed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, which details in writing the hydra-headed and systematic strategy of the Iranian authorities to suppress and strangle the Bahá'í community into oblivion.

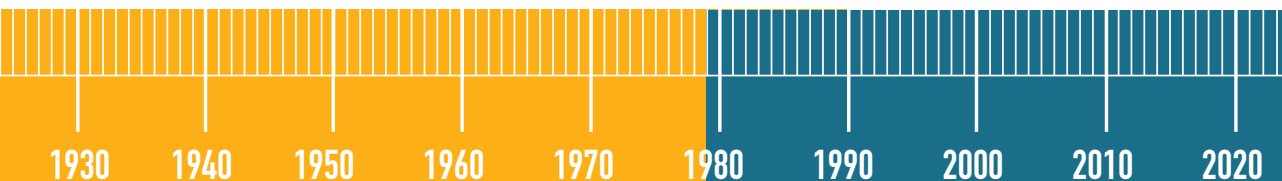
TIMELINE

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 Ottoman Palestine.
29 May 1892	Bahá'u'lláh passes away while staying at Bahji, outside Akka.
June 1903	More than 100 Bahá'ís are 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	Ayatollah Ruhollah 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.



PRE-1979

25 July 1989	Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani becomes president of Iran.
25 February 1991	The “Bahá’í Question” memorandum signed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khameni. 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.
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.
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.
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 Naimi, Saeid Rezaie, Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Vahid Tizfahm.
14 June 2010	End of three-day trial of the seven imprisoned Bahá’í leaders, who are 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.
September 2017 December 2018	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.



POST-REVOLUTION

TIMELINE

February 2018	In a striking show of solidarity, 25 prominent professors, lawyers, and judges from around the world address the head of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, Mohammad Javad Larijani, asking him to acknowledge and take steps to remedy the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran.
May 2018	A new wave of arrests and raids on Bahá'í homes in multiple Iranian provinces, such as Isfahan, Alborz, and Razavi Khorasan, suggest a coordinated strategy on the part of government authorities and raised concerns for the Bahá'í community.
October 2018	The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran, Javáid Rehman, raise concerns in a new report regarding "serious violations" against the Bahá'í community in the country.
November 2018	Bahá'ís in Iran face a new wave of intensified persecution—including arrests, discriminatory court verdicts, and shop closures—with more than 20 people arrested in the provinces of Tehran, Isfahan, Mazandaran, and East Azerbaijan.
August 2019	In a new report to the UN General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran, Javáid Rehman, outline human rights violations against Iran's Bahá'í community and other ethnic and religious minorities, and makes recommendations to the Iranian authorities.
June 2020	Despite surging caseloads during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Iranian authorities target at least 71 Bahá'ís across the country as an official threatens to "uproot" the community in Shiraz. Bahá'ís also face surging numbers of new prison sentences, re-incarcerations, and a media campaign of hatred.
November 2020	Over a hundred government agents raid the shops and homes of tens of Bahá'ís across Iran and demand that they hand over their property deeds. The simultaneous raids were staged in at least seven cities around the country and came just hours into a 15-day national covid pandemic lockdown.
February 2021	Leading Muslim figures around the world, government officials, and parliamentarians join a global outcry against the unjust confiscation of properties owned by Bahá'ís in a farming village, Ivel, in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran.
March 2021	A global campaign for the Bahá'ís in Iran, #ItsTheirLand, in response to property appropriations by the Iranian government, generate an unprecedented outpouring of solidarity from officials at the United Nations and the European Union, elected officials, religious figures including Muslim leaders, lawyers, prominent human rights advocates, farmers' associations, actors, and other prominent figures.
April 2021	Continuing Iran's decades-long campaign of persecution of its Bahá'í community from cradle to grave, the Iranian authorities ban the Bahá'ís of Tehran from burying their loved ones in a space previously allocated to them in Tehran's Khavaran cemetery.
August 2021	A campaign, #StopHatePropaganda, call on Iran's government to end 40 years of government-sponsored hate speech against the country's Baha'ís—and reaches over 88 million people as it trends around the world.
August 2021	A fresh wave of economic strangulation begins against the Bahá'ís as the Iranian authorities try to confiscate properties belonging to six Bahá'ís in the province of Semnan. Concerns later emerge that the new seizures are being coordinated by a parastatal body as a plan by Iran's leadership to enrich itself at the expense of the Bahá'í community.

December 2021	Thirteen irrigated farmland plots belonging to Bahá'ís in the village of Kata, in southwest Iran, are targeted by authorities seeking to further expropriate the assets of Bahá'ís in the country. The move comes as Iran faces a severe water crisis across the country.
June 2022	A campaign by Iranian authorities to uproot the Bahá'í community in Shiraz takes a step forward when Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court sentences 26 Bahá'ís to a combined total of 85 years in prison. Many of the 26 sentenced to prison are couples with young children.
July 2022	Iranian agents enter a kindergarten in a major city in Iran, distribute Bahá'í books and pamphlets to its teachers, none of whom are Baha'is, then instruct and force the kindergarten staff to say, on camera, that Bahá'ís have brought these materials and distributed them to the teachers.
August 2022	Iran's Ministry of Intelligence issues an appalling statement of hate propaganda against the Bahá'ís, claiming they were part of an “espionage party” that was “propagating the teachings of the fabricated Bahá'í colonialism and infiltrating educational environments” including kindergartens, in an attempt to justify the raids, arrests, and imprisonments on Bahá'ís across Iran.
August 2022	Up to 200 Iranian government and local agents seal off the village of Roshankouh, in Mazandaran province, where a large number of Bahá'ís live, and use heavy earthmoving equipment to demolish their homes. Six homes are destroyed and over 20 hectares of land are confiscated.
August 2022	Government officials, international and national media outlets, and dozens of prominent civil society actors and individuals rush to the defense of the Bahá'ís of Iran who, within just a few weeks, had faced hundreds of fresh incidents of persecution amidst a new crackdown on the community.
December 2022	Two Bahá'í women who had previously each spent a decade in jail, Mahvash Sabet and Fariba Kamalabadi, former members of the defunct leadership group, are arrested again by the Iranian authorities. In December 2022, both women are each sentenced to a second decade in prison as the judge insults them during their trial. A third former member of the group, Afif Naimi, is also arrested.
May 2023	An agent of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence, Masoud Momeni, who had taken over the cemetery owned by the Bahá'ís in Tehran, barred Bahá'ís from using their own cemetery and then interred deceased Bahá'ís in a mass grave without the knowledge of their families and in violation of Bahá'í burial practices.
July 2023	The Bahá'í International Community launches a new campaign, #OurStoryIsOne, marking the 40th anniversary of the execution of 10 Bahá'í women in Shiraz in 1983, connecting their story to the wider struggle for gender equality and human rights in the country.

Iran's Bahá'í community, the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority, has faced persecution since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. More than 200 Bahá'ís were executed and many others were tortured, imprisoned, and denied their rights. Iran is a signatory to international human rights covenants—but it does not recognize the Bahá'í Faith. A 1991 policy document called for the progress and development of the Bahá'ís to be “blocked.” Bahá'ís are denied education and face constant official-sponsored hate speech, economic oppression, property confiscation, and arbitrary imprisonment.

INTRODUCTION: THE PERSECUTION OF IRAN'S BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

Iran's Bahá'í community, the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority, has faced persecution since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. More than 200 Bahá'ís were executed and many others were tortured, imprisoned, and denied their rights. Iran is a signatory to international human rights covenants—but it does not recognize the Bahá'í Faith. A 1991 policy document called for the progress and development of the Bahá'ís to be “blocked.” Bahá'ís are denied education and face constant official-sponsored hate speech, economic oppression, property confiscation, and arbitrary imprisonment.

Iran's Bahá'í community—the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority, with hundreds of thousands of followers—has been persecuted by the Iranian government since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

More than 200 Bahá'ís were executed in the first decade of the Islamic Republic's existence. Hundreds more were tortured or imprisoned. All formal elected Bahá'í institutions were banned. And tens of thousands of Bahá'ís lost jobs, access to education, and other rights, all because of their religious beliefs.

Iran is a signatory to international covenants that protect the human rights of the Bahá'ís, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. But its

constitution does not recognize the Bahá'í Faith as a religion. The Iranian judiciary and security services claim—always without evidence—that Bahá'ís constitute a political party and are spies for foreign governments working against Iran's national security.

International condemnation forced the Iranian government to stop executing Bahá'ís in the 1980s. But the authorities devised a new plan: to suppress the community in all spheres of life. A 1991 policy memorandum called “The Bahá'í Question,” signed by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, called for the progress and development of the Bahá'ís to be “blocked,” for the community to be destroyed as a viable entity in Iran, and even for this policy of persecution to be exported beyond Iran's borders.

State-sponsored persecution

The 1991 policy document, “The Bahá'í Question,” is the most infamous of numerous directives that have been revealed over the past 30 years and which expose the systematic and state-sponsored nature of Iran's persecution of the Bahá'ís.

“The Bahá'í Question” specifies that “the government's dealings with Bahá'ís must be in such a way that their progress and development are

blocked.” Bahá’ís must be “expelled from universities” once their beliefs become known. The document also claims that Bahá’ís engage in “political” or “espionage” activities and that official Iranian “propaganda institutions” should counter the activities of the Bahá’í community. Denial of employment and barring Bahá’ís from positions of influence are two other policies specified in the document.

A plan must also be devised, the document says, to “confront and destroy their cultural roots outside the country.”

Systematic and sustained persecution

The Iranian government has for more than 44 years systematically deployed its resources to persecute the Bahá’ís by denying them access in the educational, economic, cultural, legal, and social spheres, and by making the judiciary, security services, propaganda institutions, educational institutions, and religious and other state authorities the means for the oppression of the Bahá’ís.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, reported to the UN Human Rights Council in February 2023 that Bahá’ís “remained most severely persecuted, with a marked increase in arrests, targeting and victimization,” and that hundreds of Bahá’ís

at that moment were awaiting court rulings or enforcement of sentences on cases covering “arbitrary arrests; imprisonment and ill-treatment; raids on homes and confiscation of personal belongings; temporary release in lieu of unjustly heavy bail guarantees pending the conclusion of their trials; expulsion from or denial of entry to universities; raids on, and sealing of, business premises or refusal to issue work permits; confiscation of properties owned by Bahá’ís; confiscation and destruction of Bahá’í cemeteries or continuous questioning of their ownership despite the presentation of legal deeds; prevention of the burial of deceased Bahá’ís; and many other instances that continue to entangle the Bahá’ís in the country’s unjust judicial system.”

Targeting women, children and young people

The Islamic Republic has a demonstrated and tragic track record of targeting women and young people—including within the Bahá’í community. Ten Bahá’í women were hanged in a single night in Shiraz, in 1983, because of their beliefs, in perhaps the largest single execution of women in the country’s history. Two women out of seven jailed former leaders of the community, Mahvash Sabet and Fariba Kamalabadi, spent a decade in prison from 2008, only to be rearrested and jailed again in 2022, and sentenced to prison for another 10 years. Women with young children and babies have also been unjustly imprisoned, depriving these children of their

mothers during their formative years. Children from Bahá'í families, and young Bahá'í women as well as men, suffer the long-term effects of harassment in school and denial of higher education across the country.

Denial of education

Bahá'ís have been barred from Iranian universities since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The Iranian government's policy, as stated in the 1991 memorandum, as well as in a 2007 directive, calls on universities to expel Bahá'ís either during applications or after admission once their religious beliefs become known. Thousands have been denied the right to higher education in this way—so much so that the Bahá'í community was obliged in 1983 to create its own informal higher education initiative to meet the needs of its young people.

Denying young people the right to study shows that the government hopes to suppress, impoverish, and ultimately erase the Bahá'ís from Iranian society. Denying them the opportunity to realize their potential and to earn livelihoods in the future is, in effect, an attempt to extinguish the Bahá'ís across the generations.

Hate speech, propaganda, and stigmatization campaigns

The Iranian government's cultural institutions, covering every part of traditional and digital news media, popular broadcasts, educational literature, and religious sermons, have relentlessly waged successive campaigns of hate speech against the Bahá'ís since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

These campaigns have increased in severity in recent years. Hundreds of websites, Instagram accounts, Telegram channels, and Clubhouse rooms, with content such as “Bahá'ís are unclean and enemies of your religion,” “Associating with Bahá'ís is banned,” “Purchasing any goods from a Bahá'í store is forbidden,” as well as “The modern ‘Human Rights’ is a big lie,” and many others, have produced hundreds of thousands of pieces of disinformation reaching millions of Iranians. Blatant and outrageous calumnies are routinely used to incite hatred and violence against the Bahá'ís.

Websites and social media channels are augmented by videos, print newspaper articles, and other written media, books, seminars, exhibitions, and graffiti from both official outlets and others sponsored by the government but purporting to be independent.

Economic oppression and denial of livelihoods

All Bahá'ís in public sector roles were dismissed from their jobs after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Their means of earning a living are blocked, frustrated, and in some cases, outright shut down, in an ongoing effort to oppress and eliminate the Bahá'ís by making it impossible to earn a basic livelihood.

Bureaucratic delays are used to hinder Bahá'ís trying to run small businesses. The authorities also, often without warning, close a Bahá'í-owned business on some fabricated legal basis. Other business owners are sometimes pressured by the authorities to dismiss any Bahá'í employees and are penalized if they fail to comply. And the fundamentalist religious dogma espoused by the authorities, that Bahá'ís are “unclean,” also excludes them from the food services, hospitality, health care, and other sectors, before the denial of their right to even train in such fields.

Arbitrary confiscation and destruction of property

Seizing Bahá'í-owned properties and turning them over to state-controlled foundations has been a systematic strategy used by the Iranian authorities since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The strategy continues almost every day to deprive Bahá'ís of property assets and homes.

Hundreds of agents with earth-moving equipment razed the homes of six Bahá'í families in

Roshankouh, Mazandaran province, in August 2022. Two years earlier, in 2020, two Iranian courts issued orders that declared the ownership of land owned by 27 Bahá'ís in the village of Ivel, Mazandaran, to be illegal. The court documents indicated that the confiscation of the land was because of the religious beliefs of the Bahá'í owners. And in November of the same year, over a hundred government agents raided the shops and homes of dozens of Bahá'ís, and demanded that they hand over their property deeds.

Arbitrary imprisonment of well-known Bahá'ís just for practicing their religion

Mahvash Sabet and Fariba Kamalabadi are among two of the most prominent Bahá'ís to be arrested, first in 2008, and again in 2022; both times, without just cause. Sabet and Kamalabadi were both members of an informal leadership group which took pastoral care of the Iranian Bahá'í community's basic needs, with the full knowledge of the government, until all seven members of the group were arrested in 2008 and jailed for a decade. In 2022, five years after their release, Sabet and Kamalabadi were detained once again and have now been sentenced to a second decade in prison.

Numerous other well-known Bahá'ís in Iran have also been detained in the past as well as in more recent years and months—in a routine tactic used to chilling effect by the authorities in their efforts to terrorize the Bahá'í community.

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 Iran’s High Council for Human Rights —side by side with the facts.

Accusations & False Charges	The Facts
<p>Bahá’ís face no official discrimination. Rather, Iranian officials allege that Bahá’ís enjoy the same rights as other Iranians.</p> <p>“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</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>If Bahá’ís are arrested or imprisoned, it is for political or other crimes, not for legitimate religious belief.</p> <p>“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</p>	<p>Bahá’ís do not participate in partisan politics, and charges against them almost always refer to their religious identity.</p>

<p>Bahá'ís face no discrimination in economic activity and, in fact, are wealthy and prosperous.</p> <p>“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</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Iran recognizes its obligations to educate all its citizens, and Bahá'ís are free to attend university.</p> <p>“They have professors at universities. They have students at university. So they enjoy all the possibilities and privileges.” — Dr. Larijani, 31 October 2014</p>	<p>Bahá'ís are blocked from obtaining higher education through a series of bureaucratic ruses and mandated expulsions if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís.</p>
<p>Iran condemns religious intolerance of all kinds, and Bahá'ís are free to worship.</p> <p>“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</p>	<p>The government sponsors and condones anti-Bahá'í propaganda in the media, contrary to international law.</p>
<p>Bahá'ís have played a pernicious and destructive role in Iran's history, supporting colonialism, Zionism, and other allegedly anti-regime political movements.</p> <p>“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</p>	<p>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.</p>

Bahá'ís consider selfless and constant service to humanity to be their duty, and they are committed to the betterment of society. This intention characterizes the spirit of Bahá'í communities everywhere and is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the birthplace of the Faith: Iran. Iranian Bahá'ís have, as far back as the Faith's beginnings, dedicated their lives to the progress and upliftment of their society; yet they continue to endure intense persecution and ceaseless threats because of their beliefs.

WHO ARE THE BAHÁ'ÍS?

History and teachings

**“Take ye counsel together,
and let your concern be
only for that which profiteth
mankind and bettereth the
condition thereof....”** Bahá’u’lláh

Iran holds great significance for the Bahá’í Faith. It was in this land where the Faith’s Herald, the Báb, announced in the middle of the 19th century that a Messenger from God, Bahá’u’lláh, would usher in a new age of unity, peace, and justice. Bahá’u’lláh, a Persian nobleman from Tehran, left a life of princely comfort and security to bring to humanity a new message of peace and unity; in doing so, He suffered immense persecution and deprivation. Claiming to be nothing less than a new and independent Messenger from God, Bahá’u’lláh’s 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.

Bahá’u’lláh taught that there is one God, and one human race, and that each of the world’s religions represent stages in the revelation of God’s will and purpose for humanity. He said that this moment in history represents humanity’s transition to its collective coming of age—a stage foretold in scriptures of other world religions, where humanity comes to acknowledge its oneness and begins to take steps to bring about a united, peaceful, and integrated global society.

“The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens,” Bahá’u’lláh wrote.

For a global society to flourish, Bahá’u’lláh said, it must be based on certain fundamental principles. These 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.

The Bahá’í Faith is the second-most widespread independent world religion, with over eight million followers residing in virtually every nation on earth in more than 100,000 localities. Its membership represents a cross-section of humanity, with Bahá’ís hailing from more than 2,100 diverse ethnic and tribal groups and every walk of life, including countless cultures, professions, and social or economic backgrounds. Its membership reflects the Faith’s all-encompassing scope and commitment to the oneness of humanity, and it continues to be among the fastest growing of the world’s religions.

Across the globe, Bahá’ís seek to contribute to the upliftment of their societies through social and economic development projects to promote the material, social, and spiritual well-being of humanity. Their efforts are aimed at building peaceful and cohesive communities and societies. They dedicate their energies to offering prayer gatherings for individuals and communities from all religious backgrounds to deepen spiritual roots and strengthen social ties, and they work to offer programs of moral education for children and young adolescents, as well as study circles aimed at the spiritual empowerment of youth and adults. They also seek to contribute to the search for new ideas and the development of practical solutions to the global challenges facing humanity by engaging in numerous discourses of society such as peace, human rights, the advancement of women, and the environment, to name a few, all while working shoulder-to-shoulder with others.



Delegates attending an international Bahá'í conference. The Bahá'í Faith is one of the world's most widespread religions and Bahá'ís come from almost every ethnic and national background.

Sharing a common goal of serving humanity—and continually striving to refine their inner lives and characters as well as their personal, family, and collective lives to accord with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh—Bahá'ís invite the participation of every member of society to contribute to the betterment of the world.

The Bahá'í community is one of learning and action, free from any sense of superiority or claim to any exclusive understanding of truth. It is a community that strives to cultivate hope for the future of humanity, to foster purposeful effort, and to celebrate the endeavors of all those in the world who work to promote unity and alleviate human suffering.

Working for social change in Iran

“Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.” Bahá’u’lláh



A photograph of a group of young Bahá’í women and girls taken before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The teachings of the Bahá’í Faith counsel its followers to spend their entire lives working for the cause of justice and unity. Despite decades and generations of persecution—since the beginning of the Bahá’í Faith in the 19th century—the Bahá’ís in Iran have striven to serve their beloved homeland by building a country that is advancing for all and that is united in its great diversity.

Bahá’ís work to this end by striving to be examples of these principles—by living out their ideals in their personal actions.

Embodying and applying these principles can and does require sacrifice. The Bahá’ís in Iran could, at any point, avoid the persecutions they face by denying their beliefs or leaving their homeland. Access to higher education, business licenses, and public sector jobs would all become possible, and the threat of property confiscations, home destructions, or arbitrary detention would all fade. Yet, the Bahá’ís choose to stay in Iran, and hold true to their beliefs and ideals, committed to the upliftment of their beloved country.

Humanity is “organic with the world,” the Bahá’í teachings state. Our inner lives mold our social environments and are also affected by them. Bahá’ís strive to transform themselves, as indi-

viduals and communities, by serving humanity and by working to manifest the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh in their personal and collective lives.

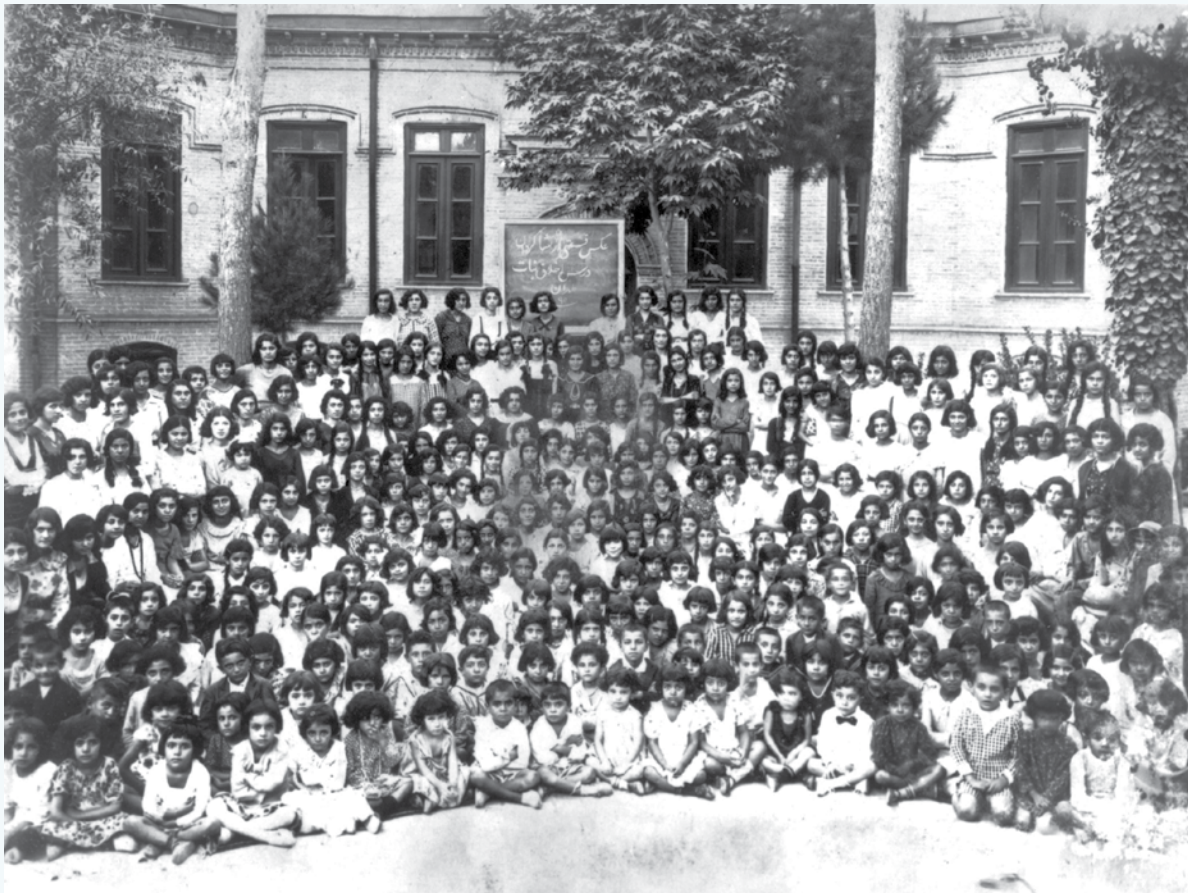
Changing the prevailing relationships in society—between individuals, their communities, and their governing institutions—is therefore where Bahá'ís believe the work of personal and collective transformation takes shape. The Bahá'í community knows this is a difficult path. But it also knows that walking this path is essential if Iran is to achieve the fundamental changes needed in the values and relationships that define its society.

As part of this process, the Bahá'ís in Iran, as in every part of the world, are striving and learning, together with others, to give expression to the principles outlined in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. In doing so, they are seeking to answer questions such as: How does humanity ensure that peoples and groups are not pitted one against another? How can we raise and support institutions that are trustworthy and work for the betterment of all? How can economic relationships become just and free of corruption? How can prejudices of all kinds be eliminated? How can people ensure that no individual or group is exploited for the benefit of others? How do individuals search

for solutions in a united commitment to truth, and not through contention or the distortion of the views of other people?

Answering these questions requires the independent investigation of truth, systematic exploration, and consultation with others, as well as sustained effort.

There are numerous accounts of Iranian Bahá'ís, who, motivated by service, sacrifice, love, and goodwill toward their fellow citizens, have explored these questions and have consecrated their energies to educational, medical, industrial, and agricultural advancements within the country. From the earliest days of the Faith in Iran, they established schools in the remotest parts of the country with the aim of eliminating illiteracy, and founded and built hospitals and dispensaries, so that, with the aid of modern medical science and new inventions, they might contribute to the health and well-being of their compatriots. They have also exerted great efforts to contribute to the development and prosperity of cities and villages, to further industry and agriculture, and to exalt and celebrate the arts and crafts of Iran.



Before they were closed by government decree in 1934, non-religious Bahá'í schools in Iran attracted thousands of students. Shown here are participants in Bahá'í classes in Tehran with their teachers, in a photograph dated 13 August 1933.

Despite their continued contributions to Iranian society, Iranian Bahá'ís experience constant persecution and ceaseless threats because of their beliefs. Yet, out of loyalty and their moral commitment to promote unity, as well as their deep love for Iran and its people, they sacrifice not only their time and their possessions but their

very lives, choosing to remain in their homeland, to which they share allegiance with their fellow Iranian citizens. They continue to dedicate their lives to the flourishing of Iran, even amid the very real threats to their safety and security, indeed to their very existence.

The government of Iran is bound by international law to respect the rights of all its citizens, including religious minorities, an obligation which it adopted of its own accord. Why does it continue to blatantly violate the terms of its obligation? Iran's clerics have been opposed to the spiritual renewal called for by the Bahá'í teachings since its inception. The persecutions and discriminatory policies and laws of the Islamic Republic attest to this opposition. Iranian authorities have systematically sought to suppress and even eliminate the Bahá'í community—often in violent and dehumanizing ways.

WHY DOES THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT PERSECUTE THE BAHÁ'ÍS?

Iran's obligations under international law

The Iranian government has a direct obligation under international law to protect its citizens from discrimination and persecution, and to prosecute those who break the law, an obligation to which the government itself acceded when it signed and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Under the ICCPR, which Iran signed in 1968 and ratified in 1975, never revoking these after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran's government is bound by the following 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 states “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]



Roy Wilkins, civil rights activist, at the International Conference on Human Rights, Tehran, 1968.

“They have sustained every tribulation and displayed patience in the face of grievous injustice. They have forsaken all comfort and prosperity, have willingly submitted to dire suffering and adversity in the path of Thy love, and are still held captive” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Roots of the persecution

Even after signing and ratifying international covenants that explicitly outline its duty to protect citizens, why does the government of Iran persist in its persecution of the Bahá'ís?

The animosity directed by Iran's leaders to Bahá'ís must be understood by looking back to the origins of the Faith in Iran and what it represented to many religious leaders at the time. The idea that God would have sent a new Messenger, delivering a new Revelation—as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh—runs counter to the understanding of many Shiite Muslim leaders, who believe that Muhammad was the “Seal” of the Prophets. Many believe that Islam is God's “final” religion, whose 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 in fact culminated through Bahá'u'lláh's mission and teachings.

The initial message of the Bahá'í Faith was delivered by its Forerunner, a 25-year-old merchant from Shiraz, Iran, who took the title “the Báb,” which means “gate” or “door” in Arabic. It was on 23 May 1844 when the Báb proclaimed to a young seeker that He was the Promised One, as prophesied in the sacred scriptures of Is-

lam. 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. At a time when Iran was experiencing widespread moral breakdown, and was stagnating in its material progress, the Báb began to reveal new scriptures, advocating new rights for women as well as the poor, while abrogating certain laws of the Quran.

Unsurprisingly, these new ideas aroused excitement and hope among all classes, rapidly attracting thousands of followers. The Báb's revolutionary prescription for spiritual renewal, and its vast appeal to the Iranian populace, was seen by Iran's religious establishment as a threat to their power and authority. As a result, thousands of early followers of the Báb, known as Bábis, were killed at the urging of religious leaders. The Báb was also executed by a government order, also instigated by clerics, in 1850.

All this was only the beginning of the countless persecutions which continue to beset the Bahá'í community in Iran.

Two Bahá'ís families who were injured in attacks on their homes.



The Báb prepared the way for the imminent appearance of another Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh, Whose mission was to usher in an age of peace and justice promised in all the world's religions. At the heart of Bahá'u'lláh's message are the teachings that there is only one God, that all the world's religions are expressions of the Creator's will, that humanity is a single race, and that the time has come for humanity to unite and create an "ever-advancing civilization."

Iran's religious orthodoxy responded with a renewed determination to extinguish the religion brought by Bahá'u'lláh and to force its followers back to Islam. Bahá'u'lláh suffered 40 years of imprisonment, torture, and exile, and was sent to the prison city of Akka (now Acre, in Israel) in what was then Ottoman Palestine. 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 clerics.

In the 1930s, the government of Reza Shah Pahlavi ordered owners of Bahá'í-established schools—which were open to all—to continue operating on Bahá'í holy days, even though Bahá'ís suspend work on the holy days outlined by their faith. All religious communities do the same. When the Bahá'ís declined, based on principle, to keep their schools open on religious holidays, government officials shut down all Bahá'í-run schools in the country, which at the time numbered more than 50 and enrolled thousands of students.

In 1955, the Pahlavi regime allowed the nation-wide 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. The incitement created an uprising against the Bahá'í community, which resulted in the deaths of seven Bahá'ís and the widespread destruction of many Bahá'í homes, properties, and businesses. Sheikh Falsafi was joined by the Shah's Minister of Defense in de-

molishing the dome of the Bahá'í national headquarters in Tehran with pickaxes.

These are just a few examples of the earlier attacks experienced by the Bahá'í community in Iran—which then continued to take on a new degree of sophistication following the 1979 Revolution in Iran.

Muslim leaders and members of the Shah of Iran's army destroyed the National Bahá'í Center with pickaxes in Tehran in 1955.



Brutal killings and then a shift in tactics: 1979 and beyond

In the period immediately preceding the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the Bahá'ís in Iran experienced a surge of attacks presaging the wholesale persecution yet to follow. In 1978, at least seven Bahá'ís were killed, mainly owing to mob violence incited by religious leaders. Then, with the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran the following year, the attacks on the Bahá'ís in the country reached a new level; they became 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. When the Republic's new constitution was drawn up in April 1979, which itself was based on the 1905 constitution, certain rights of the Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian minorities in Iran were specifically mentioned and protected. 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 means that Bahá'ís enjoy no rights of any sort and that they can be attacked and persecuted with impunity. Courts in the Islamic Republic have denied Bahá'ís the right of redress or protection

against assault, killings, theft, the destruction of personal property, 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 community saw rapid deterioration of its position within Iranian society. The house of the Báb, the holiest Bahá'í site in Iran, was destroyed in September 1979. Then, a November 1979 edict from the Ministry of Education required not only the dismissal of all Bahá'í teachers from schools, but also held them responsible for the repayment of all salaries they had previously received. At least seven Bahá'ís were killed that year. Two were executed by the government. 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, known as the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran, were abducted and disappeared without a trace; their whereabouts are still unknown. It seems certain that they were executed. At least 24 Bahá'ís were killed that year. Twenty were executed by the



Destruction of the House of the Báb in 1979.

government and the rest were stoned, assassinated, or burned to death.

In the following year, at least 48 Bahá'ís were killed in Iran. That number included the so-called “second” National Spiritual Assembly, which had been 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. Twenty-nine in 1983. And 30 in 1984. Again, the targets of these executions were often members of Bahá'í governing assemblies. Four members of the “third” National Spiritual Assembly were executed in 1984, even after 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, one aged just 17 and most in their 20s, were hanged. The primary charge against them was teaching Bahá'í children's classes. The women were subjected to intense physical and mental abuse to coerce them to recant their Faith—a tactic often used on Bahá'í prisoners. Yet, like most Bahá'ís who



Funeral of Mehdi Anvari and Hedayatollah Dehghani, executed Bahá'ís, in Shiraz.

have been arrested in Iran, they refused to deny their beliefs. The fact that so many imprisoned Bahá'ís were given this option of recanting, with the promise of release if they did so, is among the strongest proofs that 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, it refocused its policies toward economic, educational, and cultural restrictions aimed at blocking the development of the Bahá'í community. The new policy was defined in a 1991 government memorandum titled, “The Bahá'í Question”—an effort that remains in full force.

Today, Bahá'u'lláh's life and mission are becoming increasingly well-known around the world. Millions of people are learning to apply His teachings to their individual and collective lives for the betterment of society. Yet, the persecution of His followers in Iran continues unabated.

Iran's obligations under international law

The Iranian government has a direct obligation under international law to protect its citizens from discrimination and persecution, and to prosecute those who break the law, an obligation to which the government itself acceded when it signed and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Under the ICCPR, which Iran signed in 1968 and ratified in 1975, never revoking these after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran's government is bound by the following 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, color, 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 states “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]

Iranian government officials claim that Iran's 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, discriminated against economically, or expelled or blocked from university, but also by official documents that spell out a systematic national policy designed to prevent the development of the Bahá'í community at every turn. These claims are further contradicted by the fact that the persecution of an individual can stop if they recant their faith.

HOW DOES THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT PERSECUTE THE BAHÁ'ÍS?

Persecution through Iranian law and government documents

Discrimination against Bahá'ís is embedded in Iran's constitution. Defining the country's laws according to Islamic criteria, and listing other religious minorities but not the Bahá'ís in the constitution, has left the Bahá'ís exposed without any protection under Iranian law:

- 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 13 offers some protections 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 religion—was excluded from similar constitutional protection. The result, as noted by Shahin Milani, a legal analyst at the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, in a paper in the Columbia University's Journal of International Affairs, is “institutionalized religious discrimination” against Bahá'ís.
- “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. “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.”
- 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.



Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who signed the 1991 “Bahá’í Question” memorandum, calling for the progress and development of the Bahá’ís to be “blocked”.

The 1991 memorandum on “the Bahá’í question”

Over the years, the United Nations and human rights groups have discovered and made public several secret documents of the Iranian authorities that outline Iran’s policy of oppression toward Bahá’ís, making the persecution toward the community irrefutable. Foremost among such documents is a high-level 1991 memorandum that specifically and ominously refers to the “the Bahá’í question” as a problem to be addressed.

Drafted by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and signed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the policy document 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,” states the memorandum, which was obtained by the UN and released in



A letter from Iranian authorities regarding barring Bahá’ís from higher education.

1993. In its specifics, the memorandum outlines a series of measures to restrict the educational, economic, and cultural life of Iranian Bahá’ís, targeting every stage of an individual’s life.

For instance, regarding education, it states that Bahá’í children should only be enrolled in schools with a “strong and imposing religious ideology” and outlines that students must be expelled from universities if they identify themselves as Bahá’ís. As for work opportunities, it specifies that anyone who identifies as a Bahá’í must be denied employment.

The memorandum also laid the groundwork for a sustained hateful propaganda campaign, which directed the government to establish an “independent section” within its propaganda apparatus to “counter” the religious activities of Bahá’ís.

Still in force today

Iran routinely denies persecuting or discriminating against Bahá'ís. If this were true, why has the 1991 document never been rescinded? And why have subsequent policy documents reinforced the existence of the 1991 memorandum and extended the oppressive directives further? Examples are listed below and a full reproduction of these documents appear in the Annexes.

- A confidential letter from Iranian military headquarters, dated 29 October 2005, which surfaced in 2006. The letter directs various intelligence agencies, police organizations, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps “to identify persons who adhere to the Bahá'í Faith and monitor their activities.”
- A 2006 letter from Iran's Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology to 81 Iranian universities, instructing them to expel all Bahá'í students. The letter explicitly states that its directive is “in accordance” with the 1991 memorandum.
- A 9 April 2007 letter from the security unit of the Public Places Supervision Office to police commanders nationwide. The letter uses language similar to the 1991 memorandum banning 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,” and describing specifically the importance of “ongoing monitoring and supervision” of the activities of Bahá'ís.

Discrimination at 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.

- 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,” the letter states. “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.”
- A 21 September 2020 directive instructing local authorities in the city of Sari, in the northern province of Mazandaran, to “conduct strict controls” on the Bahá'ís in the city by “monitoring their operations,” and introduce measures to “identify Bahá'í students” to “bring them into Islam.”

Fatwas that propagate hate: “They are even more unclean than dogs”

The demeaning treatment of Bahá'ís by Iranian authorities has remained a consistent theme throughout Iranian policy. Iran's religious leaders, for instance, have issued several 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 from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali 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 Ali Khamenei, in an undated fatwa

“Bahá'ís are unclean and association with them must be avoided.” — Ayatollah Behjat, 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

“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 in 2010

“You should avoid any association and dealings with this perverse and misguided sect.” — Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a fatwa issued on 26 March 2018

Surveillance, identification, and monitoring

In a clear invasion of privacy and an affront to human dignity, the government has directed authorities and police, through various government documents, to carefully identify and monitor Bahá'ís.

A disturbing example of the government-mandated nature of such invasive activities can be seen in the confidential letter from Iranian military headquarters, dated 29 October 2005, directing various intelligence agencies, police organizations, and the Revolutionary Guard “to identify persons who adhere to the Bahá'í Faith and monitor their activities.”

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

“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 Ms. 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.”

The 9 April 2007 letter to police commanders, referenced earlier, also speaks specifically about the importance of “ongoing monitoring and supervision” of the activities of Bahá'ís.

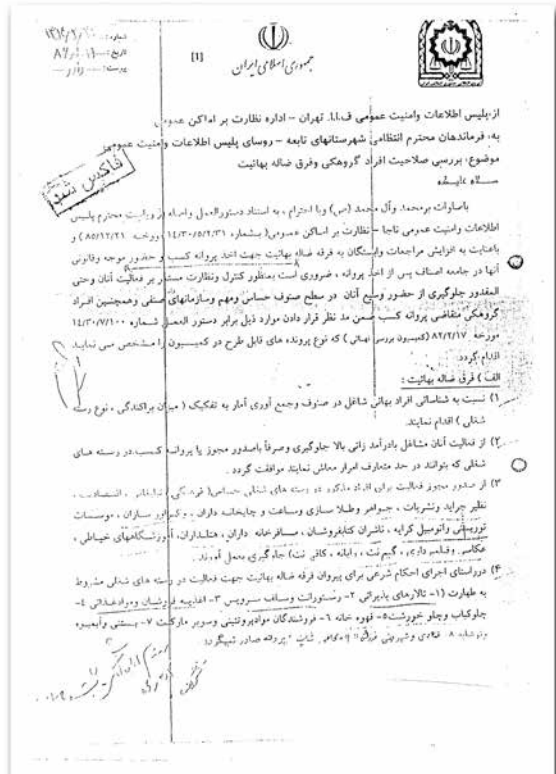
In 2021, the League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran and the International Federation for Human Rights uncovered an official Iranian directive which instructs local authorities in the city of Sari, in the northern province of Mazandaran, to “conduct strict controls” on the Bahá'ís in the city by “monitoring their operations,” and introduce measures to “identify Baha'i students” so as to “bring them into Islam.” The directive, dated 21 September 2020, adopted a “detailed plan” to ensure that the Bahá'í community is “rigorously controlled,” including through their “public and private meetings” as well as “their other activities.” The document was issued by the Commission on Ethnicities, Sects, and Religions in Sari, which operates under the aegis of Iran's Supreme National Security Council—a body chaired by Iran's president and those responsible for security matters. The directive was issued to local and provincial police, the head of Sari's

Intelligence Department, the commander of the local Basij paramilitary force, the head of education, school and university officials, as well as to the Departments of Industry, Mining and Trade, Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism.

In 2022, in Sanandaj, and several other small cities in the ethnic Kurdish region of western Iran, members of the Bahá'í community were under constant surveillance and harassment, and were threatened because of their beliefs. And in August 2023, authorities in Sistan and Baluchistan province installed surveillance cameras aimed at the homes of Bahá'ís in order to monitor their activities and visitors.

For those who have been wrongfully arrested without any supporting evidence, degrading ankle-band monitoring has also been used to surveil their movements.

Such affronts are strikingly reminiscent of examples throughout history when governments have monitored minorities with draconian measures ahead of even more sinister actions.



Original of 9 April 2007 letter restricting Bahá'í businesses.

Executions

The most heinous acts faced by the Bahá'í community in Iran have been numerous government-mandated executions. 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 10 Bahá'í women in Shiraz on 18 June 1983. Their crime: teaching moral empowerment classes to Bahá'í youth and children.

The 10 women were arrested in October and November 1982. Many were first held at a Sepah (Revolutionary Guard) Detention Centre and then transferred to Adelabad Prison. They suffered harsh interrogations and torture by the Revolutionary Guard coercing them to recant their faith. Each of them was asked multiple times, “Islam or death,” but none of them agreed to sign the statements authorities prepared for them to escape execution. They were refused the right of access to a lawyer, denied a trial in a public court, and ultimately sentenced by the Sharia judge of Shiraz to execution by hanging on charges of “Zionism,” “spying for Israel,” and teaching moral education classes for children.

On 18 June 1983, the 10 women were taken in secret, before dawn, to the Chowgan Square polo field in Shiraz, where they were hanged. Ranging in age from 17 to 57, they were led to the gallows in succession, each forced to watch the next woman's death in a harrowing attempt to coerce them a final time into recanting their faith. According to an eyewitness report, however, the women went to their fate singing and exhibiting immense courage and faith.

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 execution.”

After the brutal executions, it was reported that wounds could still be seen on the bodies of the women as they lay in the morgue, wounds from the torture they faced in the months leading up to their execution.



The 10 Bahá'í women in Shiraz executed on 18 June 1983.

Top (left to right): Akhtar Sabet (25), Ezzat-Janami Eshraghi (57), Mahshid Niroumand (28), Mona Mahmoudnejad (17), Nosrat Ghufrani Yaldaie (46).

Bottom: Roya Eshraghi (23), Shahin (Shirin) Dalvand (25), Simin Saberi (24), Tahereh Arjomandi Siyavashi (30), Zarrin Moghimi-Abyaneh (29).

The youngest among the women was Mona Mahmoudnejad, a 17-year-old schoolgirl who, because of her youth and obvious 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 kissing the noose itself, before putting it around her own throat.

Another young woman, Zarrin Moghimi-Abyaneh, 29, told the interrogators, whose chief goal was to force her to 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—Roya Eshraghi, 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. Eshraghi responded: “I will not exchange my faith for the whole world.”

Their families were not even notified of their deaths, their bodies were not returned to their families, and they did not receive dignified burials with religious rites. It is believed that they were buried in the Bahá'í cemetery in Shiraz by the authorities. The cemetery was later demolished and made into a “cultural and sports building” for the Revolutionary Guard in 2014.

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



Two nights prior, six Bahá'í men (some of them relatives of these 10 women) were executed in that same square. More than 200 Bahá'ís were executed by the Iranian authorities in the years immediately after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Human rights groups and ordinary citizens around the world were shocked and outraged at these barbaric acts by the Iranian authorities. Global leaders, at the time, led a wave of appeals calling for condemned Bahá'í women and men to be released from their death sentences.

The international outcries put an end to the killings in the 1980s, and served as an important safeguard for the physical lives of Iranian Bahá'ís. Nevertheless, more action is needed, as the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran continues in different forms, and with impunity, to this day.

Detentions and imprisonments

“The Bahá’ís are the well-wishers of the government, obedient to its laws and bearing love towards all peoples.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Arbitrary detentions

Sadly, many Bahá’ís in Iran know how it feels to be detained on false charges, or without due process, and then harshly interrogated and mistreated. They face physical harm, sometimes violent treatment by prison guards and officials, amidst poor conditions. Experiences of extreme verbal or psychological abuse are also common while detained. Many are held for long periods and are often detained for weeks or months before trial or are released only after posting exorbitantly high bail demands, which often require families to hand over deeds to their properties or business licenses. There have been incidents of torture and beatings while in detention, and hundreds of cases where individuals have been subjected to long periods of solitary confinement, both during pre-trial detention and after sentencing. And even when not in prison, the Bahá’ís face great degrees of psychological turmoil from the ongoing threat and very real possibility of being detained at any given moment throughout their lives. Families are often left without any news as to the whereabouts of loved ones who have been detained, and they are made to wait for information in a perpetual state of distress.



A 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.

Widespread detentions often follow when there is broader unrest within the country. In response to such civil discontent, the government often casts the Bahá'ís as a scapegoat, as if the Bahá'ís were to blame for all the ills of society, even though the teachings of their Faith call on them to practice obedience to their government. Rather than addressing the underlying challenges facing Iranian society and responding to the aspirations of the Iranian people, the government has, grotesquely, continued to blame the Bahá'ís, whose purpose is shaped by constructive service to society and who refuse to adopt approaches to social change that are adversarial, such as violent protest and upheaval.

A wave of unjustifiable arrests between September and November 2022 serve as a striking recent example.

A Bahá'í who had been in detention without due process since September 2022 reported that he had been charged with “propaganda against the regime through teaching the Bahá'í Faith,” “propaganda against sacred Islamic Sharia,” and “communicating and cooperating with foreign media through interviews and sending news of human rights violations and inciting people to create ongoing protests through cyberspace.” He had also been beaten and denied requests to be examined by a doctor. Reports indicate that interrogators tried to extract a forced confession from him for a crime he did not commit, and that he was denied access to a lawyer.

Two young men, aged just 16, were detained in October 2022, and held for several hours without any information being given to their families. They were interrogated and beaten. Their



A photograph of Bahá'ís from across Iran who were arrested in 2012 and were later tried in Yazd.

homes were searched, and personal items were confiscated before they were released.

And in November 2022, 29 Bahá'ís were unjustifiably arrested. Some were released on bail, while others were held for some time at unknown locations with no news of their detention.

Another report indicated that, because of overcrowding in Iran's prisons following increased arrests, one detained Bahá'í was held with 16 other individuals in a small cell almost comparable in size to those used for solitary confinement. The individual was forced to receive a visit from his wife in a prison stairwell because no other space was available.

Unjust imprisonments

Contrary to the official line, Bahá'ís in Iran are imprisoned for their religious beliefs, not other crimes. Arbitrary arrest and imprisonment are 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. The arrest, detention, and imprisonment of Bahá'ís is undertaken as a state policy—one that appears largely designed as a warning to others to not deviate from Iran's official religion—and is supported by a system of judicial and prosecutorial misconduct that demonstrates a national effort to discriminate against Bahá'ís at every stage of life.

As an example, in January 2016, 24 Bahá'ís in Gorgan, Golestan province, were sentenced to a collective 193 years in prison. Arrested in 2012, some had been harassed or tortured during their interrogations.

The fact that religion was at the heart of their alleged crimes was 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, some of which are listed below, were unmistakably based on religious issues.

- Forming and managing an unlawful administration and anti-security propaganda to advance "Baháism"
- Creating propaganda in favor of "Baháism" and against the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- Collaborating with hostile anti-Islamic and anti-Shia entities by way of assistance and effective involvement in advancing their goals

The court documents also made it clear that the government was concerned with the fact that many of the 24 Bahá'ís in Gorgan were engaged in study groups or youth programs designed to assist individuals to serve their communities and to work for the betterment of society. These activities, however, meet the common-sense definition of religious belief and practice. They are protected under international law, which upholds the right to freedom of religion or belief: "... 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."

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

Harassment of lawyers who defend Bahá'ís is also common. In the case of the 24 Bahá'ís in Gorgan, for instance, their lawyer was threatened during a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Intelligence and a cleric. When the defendants were finally summoned to court, their lawyer was given only 15 minutes to read 5,000 pages of court documents prior to the court hearing.

In a similar case in Hamadan, where 10 Bahá'ís were arrested and charged with "propaganda against the regime," a lawyer who was following the appeal of their conviction was summoned to

the local office of the Ministry of Intelligence, where he was threatened and told to resign. The 10 from Hamadan had been arrested in 2015 and put on trial in late July that year. During the trial, the judge—who was a member of the religious clergy—repeatedly questioned the defendants about their beliefs, openly demonstrating his animosity and religious prejudice against Bahá'ís. At one point, upon hearing that the Bahá'í fasting period lasts 19 days and takes place in March every year, the judge suggested that Bahá'ís had purposefully chosen these dates for the month of fasting so that Muslims would change their religion and become Bahá'ís, allured by the prospect of not having to fast for a longer period of time during the hot summer heat. At another point, the judge refused to examine Bahá'í books offered as evidence of the peaceful nature of the Bahá'í teachings, stating that he was “not mentally prepared” to read the books and was fearful of being led astray. For their alleged crimes, the 10 received either one- or two-year prison sentences.

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 that the charge against him was “Bahaism.”

Another example of the arbitrary and harsh basis of the imprisonments includes an instance in 2018, when a resident of Tehran, who had been arrested in October/November 2017 because of hosting a Bahá'í holy day celebration, was tried and sentenced to 10 years in prison by Branch

26 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court for alleged “formation and management of an illegal Bahá'í group with intent to disturb national security.” Such a sentence is in direct contravention of Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which outlines the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion—an obligation which the government of Iran has freely consented to abide by, yet consistently fails to uphold.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, hundreds of Bahá'ís have been arrested, detained, and have spent time in pre-trial detention or have served prison sentences.



The Iranian government's systematic campaign to persecute the Bahá'í religious minority accelerated in June 2022 with the arrest, court hearing or imprisonment of at least 18 Bahá'í citizens across the country, bringing that month's total to 44 people.



A Bahá'í-organized childrens' class in Katsbas, outside Shiraz.

Imprisoned for helping underprivileged children

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

In May 2006, 54 Bahá'ís and 10 Muslims 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 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. Beginning in 2005, members of the group met with the children every Friday morning for four hours. Project tutors—including Muslim youth—would lay out rugs in front of the houses of the parents so that the families could feel at ease observing the lessons and seeing that the only intention of the initiative was to serve the children.

The group started working with 20 children, but because of an appreciation for the efforts within the community, the number quickly swelled to



Haleh Rouhi, Sasan Taqva, and Raha Sabet were taken into custody in November 2007. They served a four-year sentence on charges connected entirely with their belief in and practice of the Bahá'í Faith.

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. 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 children with physical and intellectual disabilities. 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 Muslim individuals involved were released immediately together with one Bahá’í from the group; the remaining 53 Bahá’ís were released over the course of the following 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.” Acts of service to uplift the plight of children in unstable circumstances were reframed by the Iranian government as a threat.



In March and May 2008, seven Bahá’í leaders were arrested and later sentenced to 10 years in prison apiece. Four of them were re-arrested in 2022 and the two women each sentenced to a second decade in prison.

Jailing seven Bahá’í leaders for 10 years

The most notable case of unjust detention was the arrest and imprisonment of seven national-level Bahá’í leaders in 2008, a story which has resumed in 2022 with manifest injustice.

In May 2008, international human rights monitors went on high alert over the arrest of seven Bahá’ís in Iran, known as the “Friends” (“Yaran” in Persian)—an ad hoc committee already known to the government whose primary purpose was to tend to the spiritual and social needs of the Iranian Bahá’í community. The individuals had been appointed to carry out this work in the absence of a formally elected council that would administer the affairs of Bahá’ís at the national level. Such a body is present in virtually every country in the world today, excluding Iran, where Bahá’í administration, both at the national

and local levels, was declared “illegal” by Iranian authorities in 1983.

Six of the seven members of the Friends 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 arrested two months prior in Mashhad, on 5 March 2008. The manner of their arrests, and the fact that all seven were initially held incommunicado after their seizure, led many to worry that they would suffer the same fate as the last group of national level Bahá’í leaders, who had (barring one) been arbitrarily arrested, executed, and buried in unmarked graves some 25 years earlier. The seven members include:

Fariba Kamalabadi, a high school honors graduate who was denied the opportunity to attend regular university. Nevertheless, she obtained a degree in developmental psychology through informal study.

Jamaloddin Khanjani, a successful businessman and industrialist who established Iran’s first automated brick factory.

Aff Naimi, who wished to be a doctor, but was denied entry into medical school as a Bahá’í. He

later went on to manage his father-in-law’s textile factory.

Saeid Rezaie, an agricultural engineer who ran a successful farming equipment business in Fars province for more than 20 years. He also authored several books.

Mahvash Sabet, a teacher and school principal who was dismissed from public education because she was a Bahá’í. She later rose to international prominence for the poetry she wrote during her imprisonment.

Behrouz Tavakkoli, a social worker who was fired from his government job in the early 1980s because of his Bahá’í beliefs and who subsequently turned to carpentry to support his family.

Vahid Tizfahm, an apprentice in optometry who later became an owner of an optometry shop in Tabriz.

International pressure was marshaled and the seven Bahá’ís arrested in 2008 were, after about a month in jail, allowed to make outside contact. All of them were held in Tehran’s Evin Prison—one of the primary sites known for holding prisoners of conscience, and where serious human



The seven Bahá'í leaders arrested in March and May 2008 and later sentenced to 10 years in prison apiece. Left to right: Behrouz Tavakkoli, Fariba Kamalabadi, Vahid Tizfahm, Mahvash Sabet, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Saeid Rezaie, Afif Naimi.

rights abuses have been known to be committed against detainees and inmates.

After another two months of imprisonment, false allegations emerged that the Friends were operating an “illegal organization” with ties to Israel. A whole year passed before formal charges were made and the individuals were allowed to meet with lawyers—a grave violation of national and international human rights and due process.

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 aimed 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;

6. Conspiring to commit offenses against national security.

Following the first session of their trial, their lawyer, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Shirin Ebadi, who had hardly an hour of access to her clients, explained that she had read the dossier of charges against them and found no proof to sustain their criminal charges.

“I am the head of the legal team representing these seven Bahá'ís. I have studied their files thoroughly,” said Ms. Ebadi at the time. “There is not a shred of evidence for the charges leveled against them.”

During their trial, remarks from the bench indicated extreme prejudice on the part of the judge. According to another one of their lawyers, Mahnaz Parakand, “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.”

All the accusations were absurd and baseless. Allegations that the group were spies for Israel, for instance, stemmed from the historical fact that

Two Iranian Bahá'í women, Mahvash Sabet (left) and Fariba Kamalabadi (right), were arrested first in 2008 and then again in July 2022, for the second time, at the start of a fresh crackdown against Iran's Bahá'ís. By late 2023 the two women were each serving their second 10-year prison sentences.



the religious and spiritual center of the Bahá'í Faith has been in the city of Haifa since 1868, a fact which was the result of successive banishments of the Faith's prophet-founder by Islamic leaders of the time.

The individuals were convicted on three of the charges—and each ultimately sentenced to 20 years in prison. That sentence was later revised to 10 years, in accordance with the provisions of a new 2013 penal code. In late December 2018, the last imprisoned member of the Friends, Afif Naimi, a father of two, was released from prison after serving an unjust 10-year prison sentence merely for practicing his faith. While detained, Mr. Naimi experienced severe health problems and received inadequate medical treatment. Authorities made a cruel determination that the time Mr. Naimi spent recovering in a hospital would not be counted as part of his sentence.

Yet, the 10 years stolen away from each of these Bahá'ís by the authorities, and the peaceful resilience exhibited by them as they endured these baseless sentences, regrettably, do not conclude this cruel saga.

The two women, Mahvash Sabet and Fariba Kamalabadi, now regarded as symbols of resilience in Iran after spending 10 years each in prison, have since their 2018 release been arrested again and sentenced to a second 10-year imprisonment. Detained on 31 July 2022 at the start of another crackdown on hundreds of Iran's Bahá'ís, the women were put on trial four months after their second detention. During an hour-long trial, the presiding judge of the Revolutionary Court's Branch 26 in Tehran rebuked the two women for “not having learned their lesson” from their previous imprisonment.

On 10 February 2023, the Karaj Revolutionary Court also sentenced Afif Naimi, together with 12 other Bahá'ís in Alborz province, in a jointly heard case. The sentences ranged between two and seven years in prison, together with bans on residing in Alborz, leaving Iran, and participating in educational and cultural activities. Monetary fines, as well as the deprivation of various social rights and other punishments, were also imposed.

And, on 13 August 2023, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, a fourth member of the Friends, who was 90 years old at the time and suffering from cancer, was also re-arrested and detained in Evin

Prison. Mr. Khanjani was subsequently released after nearly three weeks in detention, but only after being required to post an exorbitant bail equivalent to 15 years of the average Iranian civil service salary.

Discriminated against in the courts

The Bahá'ís who are brought to court and put on trial based on false and unjust allegations are often mistreated and do not enjoy due legal process. Many Bahá'ís are denied access to their lawyers up until the last moment, and these lawyers are given inadequate time to prepare their arguments. Evidence that demonstrates the innocence of the Bahá'ís as well as the peaceful nature of their work is often disregarded or dismissed. And judges are heavily biased and often make crude and defamatory remarks against the defendant Bahá'ís.

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 cite the fact that a defendant or plaintiff is a Bahá'í as evidence against them.

A 23 June 2011 ruling in Lalejin, for instance, acquitted an individual 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.”

A 7 August 2011 letter from the Prosecutor's Office in Arak to the Iran Insurance Company stated that the signing of contracts with Bahá'ís was 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....”

Property violations: raids, seizures, and destruction

Home and business raids

Home and business raids have been a dominant terror tactic carried out by the Iranian government over the decades—with the added side effect that such confiscations have also enriched the authorities. In nearly all cases, the homes and/or workplaces of Bahá'ís are searched and items such as personal belongings are confiscated, particularly books, photographs, personal and office electronics, and other supplies, as well as items related to the Bahá'í Faith. There have also been cases where cash and jewelry have been confiscated. In one such instance, on 17 March 2019, an individual's home in Isfahan was searched by intelligence agents and all his Bahá'í materials, together with his musical instruments, were confiscated.

Since 2021, however, these unannounced and destructive raids have intensified, signaling the implementation of a larger plan by the Iranian government to increase the persecution of the community. During that year, numerous homes were raided by authorities in Baharestan, Isfahan, and Shiraz, resulting in the detention and trial of Bahá'ís who could later be called to serve prison sentences at any time.

In August 2022, 13 children and youth—two only 10 years old and the others in their early twenties—were arrested in the northern Iranian city of Qaemshahr, Mazandaran province, and detained at the Sari intelligence office. The arrests occurred at a private home where, with cruel irony, the youth, all of whom had been denied university entrance, were studying and discussing the role of education in social progress.



The house of the Báb in Shiraz, Iran, one of the most holy sites for the Bahá'ís, was destroyed by the Revolutionary Guard in 1979 and later razed by the government. These photos were taken during the demolition.

In November 1979, a group whose leader was not identified attacked the house of the Báb in Shiraz, for the second time, and using demolition equipment destroyed the remains of the buildings.

Property seizures

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

In addition to holy places, hundreds of other Bahá'í-owned properties have been confiscated and destroyed throughout Iran since the Revolution, along with hundreds of Bahá'í homes and private buildings. In 1995, for example, more than 150 confiscations were reported in Yazd. Among the stories of those ejected from their homes was that of a blind Bahá'í woman; authorities confiscated her belongings, and took pos-

session of her house, despite protests from her neighbors.

Property seizures have continued unabated over the years. In June 2010, about 50 Bahá'í-owned homes were demolished by unknown individuals in the farming village of Ivel in Mazandaran province as part of a decades-long 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 on fire. The homes had initially been confiscated in 1983, a few years after the Revolution, when at least 20 families were forced on to buses and expelled from the village. 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.



The destruction of a historic Bahá'í cemetery in Shiraz by the Revolutionary Guard.

A new spike in the number of seizures of Bahá'í properties occurred in 2021. In February of that year, dozens of Bahá'í properties were confiscated, again in Ivel; in August, after raids on Bahá'í homes, during which security agents sought and confiscated property deeds, six plots of land in Semnan province were taken; and in November, farmlands were again seized surrounding the village of Roshankouh.

In late 2021, 13 irrigated farmland plots belonging for over a century to Bahá'ís in the village of Kata, in Iran's southwest, were targeted by authorities seeking to further expropriate the assets of Bahá'ís. The Execution of Imam [Ayatollah Ruhollah] Khomeini's Order—also known as Setad, a foundation controlled by Supreme

Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, which has held and controlled assets seized from proscribed groups and individuals since the 1979 Islamic Revolution—advertised the 13 plots as for sale on an auction website in October of that year, even though Bahá'ís have held the deeds to these properties for generations. The plots were listed at only 15% of their market value.

This action came during serious water shortages in Iran, which appeared to be a motivating factor in the seizure and sale of the valuable irrigated lands. Complaints by the local Bahá'ís—and even attempts to repurchase their own lands—were rebuffed by the authorities. The Bahá'ís were told that the auction was closed to them, as well as to any Muslims who had dealings with Bahá'ís,

confirming that the seizure and auction was a targeted act of religious persecution.

More than 400 Bahá'í families had been displaced from Kata after the Revolution. Several hundred homes were torched by revolutionary mobs. The situation was so dire that the Kata Bahá'ís were forced to live in a refugee camp after the loss of their homes. Court and official directives in 2002, 2008, and 2016 have confirmed attempts by the authorities to confiscate farmlands in and around Kata.

In 2022, Setad began orchestrating more confiscations of properties belonging to Iranian Bahá'ís. A Revolutionary Court in Semnan province ordered that properties belonging to six Bahá'ís should be transferred to Setad under Article 49 of the Iranian Constitution. Article 49 requires the government to prove the legitimacy of such seizures under Islamic law. Misusing this law to justify the confiscations demonstrates the religious motivation behind the seizures.

None of the Bahá'í properties confiscated throughout Iran have been returned to their rightful owners.



A Bahá'í-owned shop sealed by the Iranian authorities in Ahvaz.



The wreckage of a Bahá'í-owned stationery shop after an arson attack in November 2010.

The homes and properties of Bahá'ís have been destroyed at numerous points and many locations across Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.



Property destruction

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, there have been countless attacks on Bahá'í holy places and Bahá'í-owned properties, including businesses and private homes in Iran. Early on, these assaults were carried out by agents of the Revolutionary Guard or other militant groups associated with the government. They often ended with seizure of the targeted property. Many attacks on Bahá'í properties have also been carried out by unknown assailants, and at night.

In August 2022, in an incident captured on video by residents, up to 200 government and local agents sealed off the village of Roshankouh, Mazandaran province, where many Bahá'ís lived, and used heavy earth-moving equipment to demolish their homes.

Destruction of a Bahá'í-owned property (including graffiti) during the rule of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's regime.

Six homes were destroyed and over 20 hectares of land were confiscated. Pepper spray was used to disperse people and gunshots were heard during the operation. Roads into and out of the village were blocked. Anyone who tried to challenge the agents was arrested and handcuffed. Agents confiscated the mobile devices of those present and attempted to prohibit filming or photographing. The authorities installed robust metal fences to restrict access of the Bahá'ís to their own homes and farmlands.





The grave site of Qaddus, an historic figure of the Bahá'í Faith, during its demolition in April 2004. The site is located in Babol, Iran.

Demolition of Bahá'í holy places and cemeteries

In addition to assaults on the living, the government has long waged—or at least condoned—a campaign of vandalism, through fire, graffiti, and ransacking, aimed at Bahá'í cemeteries as well as Bahá'í holy places.

On 9 September 1979, about six months after the Islamic Revolution, a crowd of more than 150 men entered the grounds of the house of the Báb in Shiraz, which represented one of the most holy sites in the world for Bahá'ís, it being the scene of the birth of the Bahá'í Faith in 1844. Backed by a dozen armed men, the mob



The house of the Báb in Shiraz, Iran, one of the most holy sites in the Bahá'í world, was destroyed by the Revolutionary Guard in 1979 and later razed by the government.



This photo was taken during the demolition of the house of the Báb in Shiraz, Iran.



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

demolished the house. The demolition came after months of negotiations 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 was a place of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís from around the world, 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 April 2004, another historic Bahá'í property, the grave site of Quddus, an early disciple of the Faith, was dismantled surreptitiously over several days until the structure was demolished. In June that year, authorities demolished a historic house in Tehran that had been designed and owned by Mirza Abbas Nuri, the father of Bahá'u'lláh, who history recorded as one of Iran's greatest calligraphers and statesmen. The house was not only important to Bahá'ís, representing a holy site, but was also considered an outstanding example of Iranian architecture of the period.

The Iranian government also began seizing and destroying, or otherwise desecrating, Bahá'í cemeteries around the country. This dehumanizing treatment of Bahá'ís, then, is present at every stage of an individual's life—from cradle to grave. What threat do the dead pose that justifies these acts by the Iranian government? Iranian culture respects and even venerates the dead—but this cultural norm has been cast aside by the authorities in their persecution of the Bahá'í community.



The 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 in the destruction.



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



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.

Decades of injustice at Tehran's Bahá'í cemetery

In 1981, for example, the beautifully landscaped central Bahá'í cemetery in Tehran was confiscated. The government leveled its grounds—the site of more than 15,000 burials—removing the gravestones and selling off those of value. In the 1990s, those grounds were further desecrated when bodies were exhumed and ignominiously loaded onto trucks and disposed of in an unknown location. Bulldozers were then used to clear the grounds for the construction of the “Khavaran Cultural Center,” whose construction was an absolute affront to the dignity owed to the deceased.

The executive director of the Behesht-e Zahra Organization (the agency that manages Tehran's large Khavaran cemetery, separate to the Cultural Center) later announced that a parcel of barren land of 27,000 square meters with no facilities was transferred to the Bahá'í community in replacement. The community proceeded to sacrificially develop open green space, a mortuary, a surrounding wall, and entrance and exit gates.

Photos showing narrow graves dug by Iranian authorities in their effort to force Bahá'ís to use a mass grave site rather than their own Tehran cemetery.

But in 2021, in a brazen and barbaric act, Iran's Ministry of Intelligence wrested control of the relocated Bahá'í-owned cemetery in Tehran and their appointed agent began to forcibly bury deceased Bahá'ís at a mass gravesite in Khavaran itself, adjacent to the Bahá'í cemetery. The mass grave was also the burial site for thousands of political prisoners as well as prisoners of conscience executed in the 1980s. The agent had carried out these egregious acts without notifying families of the deceased while also violating Bahá'í burial practices.





Graffiti on a Bahá'í-owned property which reads "Damn Bahá'ís."



Destruction of the Bahá'í cemetery of Sanandaj.



Car owned by a Bahá'í in Kerman province torched in 2008.



A Bahá'í-owned business which was torched in 2011.



A Baha'i-owned shop in Rafsanjan torched in 2010.



A Bahá'í-owned business which was torched in 2011.



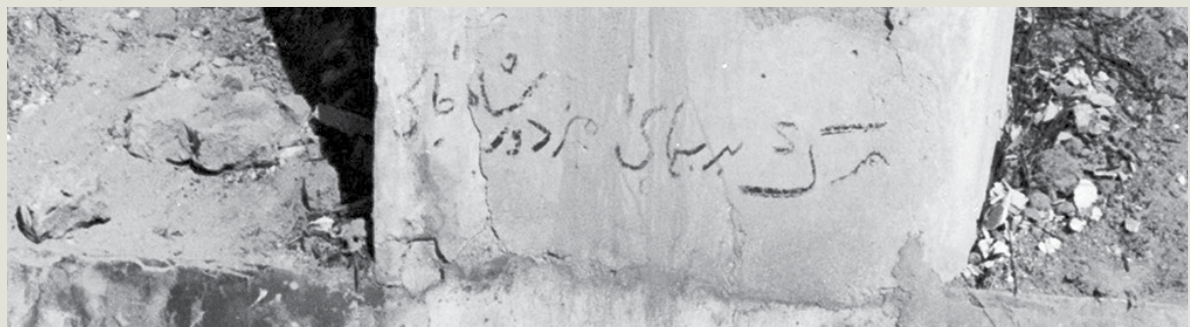
Anti-Bahá'í graffiti sprayed on steel water drums and tanks at the Semnan Bahá'í cemetery: "The cemetery of infidels residing in Semnan," and "Spit on the spirit of the Bahá'ís and their dead."



Destruction of the Bahá'í cemetery in Yazd.



Images of the destruction of Bahá'í homes in the village of Roshankouh, Mazandaran province, by Iranian government agents in August 2022.



"Death to Bahá'ís" graffiti on a Bahá'í-owned property.

Razing graves and dishonoring the deceased across the country

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. Most of these attacks were undertaken by anonymous perpetrators and often at night. Yet the use of bulldozers and other heavy equipment in several incidents, which require official approval at the municipal level, suggest at least tacit involvement by the government.

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

In February 2009, 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. Anti-Bahá'í graffiti was sprayed on large steel water drums and tanks at the cemetery. The graffiti depicted death threats to “unclean, infidel Bahá'ís” and included references to Israel and England, a theme often used in hate propaganda aimed at the Bahá'ís.

In 2014, in an episode reminiscent of the desecration of the central Tehran Bahá'í cemetery in 1981, the Revolutionary Guard began an assault on the historic Bahá'í cemetery in Shiraz, 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, were the 10 Bahá'í women hanged in 1983 by the government and whose deaths came to symbolize official persecution of the Bahá'í community.

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 for the Revolutionary Guard. Although the burial site was confiscated by the government in 1983, it was unused until April 2014, when excavations began 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 Revolutionary Guard continued to build on the site.

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, for instance, the Bahá'í cemetery in Oroumīyeh was vandalized, with approximately 120 flourishing trees that had been growing there for 15 years cut down. For nearly two weeks during the incidents, the Bahá'ís there pleaded with the relevant authorities to seek justice and demanded that the action of the trespassers be stopped, but to no avail.

In June 2023, the Bahá'í community of Arak in Markazi province were advised of the intention of Setad to auction off the land used by the Bahá'ís as a cemetery for over 120 years, containing approximately 250 graves. The cemetery was first confiscated in 1980 along with many other properties owned by the Bahá'í community throughout the country, but had remained in use under the care of the community.

Also in 2023, several Bahá'ís connected with the Bahá'í cemetery in Tehran were arrested and sentenced to prison. One woman, Shadi Shahidzadeh, who had only committed the “crime” of asking the authorities why the remains of her late grandmother were being kept in a morgue instead of buried in the Bahá'í cemetery, was later sentenced to five years in jail.



Destruction of about 50 gravestones in the Semnan Bahá'í cemetery in February 2009.

Economic strangulation

“... to earn a livelihood is a spiritual obligation....” Bahá'u'lláh



The destruction of a Baha'i family's home in Semnan.

Engaging in a trade, craft, or profession is a fundamental human right, and for Bahá'ís, it is also a spiritual obligation and a way to contribute to the advancement of society. Yet the Bahá'ís, who historically have contributed to the social, economic, and scientific development of Iranian society, have continuously been deprived of this right and expression of faith.

Soon after the formation of the Islamic Republic, the government began confiscating or freezing the assets of several community funds and savings institutions. An estimated 15,000 individuals lost their savings in these seizures, and many Bahá'ís also had their pension benefits terminated. In 1980, the Iranian government began to dismiss Bahá'ís from public sector employment. Thousands were fired from their jobs in public education, universities, government offices, hospitals, and other government institutions. Prior to being dismissed, many were asked to convert to Islam and were subsequently fired 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 and remains in force.



A Bahá'í-owned business sealed by the Iranian authorities.

Closing Bahá'í-owned businesses on religious grounds

Once Bahá'ís were barred from government jobs, attention was turned to the private sector. In the 1980s, large numbers of companies and factories owned by Bahá'ís were confiscated and closed. Other companies were pressured to dismiss their Bahá'í employees, and banks were told to block the accounts of Bahá'ís. The 1991 memorandum, which stated, “Deny them employment if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís,” formalized this discriminatory policy.

A letter dated 9 April 2007, from the security unit of the Public Places Supervision Office to police commanders nationwide, further reinforced the oppression of Bahá'ís in their employment by specifically excluding Bahá'ís from a wide range of businesses, including hotels and tourism, the food industry, jewelry, publishing, and those related to information technology and the Internet.

Repeated incidents related to the economic oppression of Bahá'ís have occurred in virtually every province throughout the country. Examples of government officials committing abuses against the Bahá'í community are listed below.

- 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 stores, government offices, and other organizations to avoid purchasing from, or to terminate business dealings with, companies and independent traders 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 do not comply;
- Conducting unexpected inspections of workplaces, summoning and interrogating Bahá'ís, and raiding Bahá'í-owned stores.

Economic displacement and strangulation cut across diverse sectors and have formed a central feature of the policy of discrimination against the community.

In late 2012, a large Bahá'í-owned business distributing hygiene products in Tehran was shut down by the 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.

In 2014, agents of the Revolutionary Guard prevented Bahá'í farmers from harvesting their crops in a rural area near Semnan. One of the owners who wanted to enter the individual's fields was told by an agent blocking the property: "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 by the authorities on the grounds of "market saturation"—although Muslim owners of optical shops in the same location experienced no such difficulties.

In October 2014, Iranian authorities descended on some 80 Bahá'í-owned shops in the cities of Kerman, Rafsanjan, and Jiroft, placing official seals of closure on the doors of the shops and posting banners saying they had been closed due to "violations of trading rules." The shop owners were told they had violated the law by closing their businesses for a Bahá'í religious holy day, and were asked to sign a statement with the words: "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 and the Trades Union Council." They were expected to observe national Muslim religious holy days, but not their own. Although trade union laws in Iran allow shop owners to close their stores for 15 days per year without the need to provide reasons for doing so, Bahá'í observances are not allowed to fall within this exemption.

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. Ten days after that, on 14 April 2015, enforcement officers came again and confiscated 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, but this time was told by officials that they could not help him as they had received instructions regarding the closure of his business. The Bahá'í man was later summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence and offered the chance to re-open his small operation if he were to become an informer on his fellow Bahá'ís—an offer which he refused. His wife, at the same meeting, was told that if she recanted her faith, they would be provided with an income; she too refused. In late May, the man re-opened his kiosk. After just three days, on 28 May 2015, authorities returned with heavy equipment and demolished it.



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.

In January 2015, intelligence agents carried out several raids on homes of some of the Bahá'ís in Shiraz. In addition to collecting the usual documents relating to the Bahá'í Faith, agents took all the inhabitants' financial and work-related documents. The materials included archived work records, a company seal, checkbooks, and property deeds.

In April 2016, 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 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 2022, in the southern Iranian city of Bandar-e-Lengeh, officials forced the closure of a Bahá'í-owned workshop and denied business licenses to two optical businesses, depriving families of their livelihoods and further strangling the economic opportunity of members of the community.

A common theme in the professional lives of Bahá'ís is, therefore, the risk of losing their businesses for choosing to observe Bahá'í holy days. The response is consistent with the 1991 memorandum's directive to deny Bahá'ís employment or livelihoods if they “identify” themselves as such.

Bureaucratic delays and invasive treatment in business affairs

Bahá'ís also face daily discrimination in the processing of small, but vital economic affairs such as the renewal of business licenses. Such incidents seldom make the news or feature in reports on human rights violations. Yet the psychological turmoil that accrues from these microaggressions weighs on Bahá'ís, who must struggle to keep their business licenses current to prevent their shops from being closed, or to carry out basic economic transactions.



A banner placed by authorities on the front of a Bahá'í-owned business. It reads: "This commercial unit has been sealed owing to violation of trading laws/rules. The owner of this commercial unit should report to the police."

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, for instance, found that authorities had put down a note stating “perverse sect of Bahaism” to indicate his religion on a form for a routine permit to carry passengers outside the city limits. The need to identify one’s religion on the form was established by Amaken, the national organization that oversees religious “morality” in public places in Iran. After crossing out the hurtful words “perverse sect,” the man was told that no such permit would be issued to him because he was a Bahá'í.

In another incident, a 29-year-old business owner seeking a business license noticed that, after having specified his religion as “Bahá'í” on the form, the authorities had changed his religion to “Jewish.” 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 to 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.

And again, a Bahá'í trader sought a business permit from the union in charge of household repair shops. Despite the documents being correctly completed and submitted in a timely manner, 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.

Calling Bahá'ís “unclean” is itself based on interpretations of Sharia law that expose a religious prejudice. And each of these forms of mistreatment have been reinforced by the intensification of anti-Bahá'í propaganda, which has also been aimed at suppressing the economic activity of Bahá'ís. Many articles repeat fatwas issued by senior clerics that insist Bahá'ís are “unclean”—referring again to the Islamic concept of ritual impurity—and suggest that faithful Muslims should refuse to associate with Bahá'ís or patronize their businesses.

Yet, at the UN and in other international fora, Iranian officials deny that such economic discrimination exists, let alone the religious character of this oppression.

“They are very much affluent people,” said Mohammad-Javad Ardeshir Larijani, Secretary of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic, 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 this effort at economic strangulation continues. Tactics that sideline their economic activity stretch to the level of independent shops and businesses, with Bahá’ís being banned by government policy from many sectors of the economy.

Bahá’ís are called by their teachings to make a livelihood, and to contribute to the prosperity of their society. The irony of the government’s acts of persecution is that it is denying Iran itself of the contributions of a hardworking population who seek to play a positive role in its social, scientific, and material life.



Mohammad-Javad Ardeshir Larijani is an Iranian conservative politician and former diplomat.

Denial of education

“Knowledge is as wings to man’s life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone.” Bahá’u’lláh



Persian text of a 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.

The 1991 memorandum states: “[the Bahá’ís] must be expelled from universities” and “they should be enrolled in schools which have a strong and imposing religious ideology.”

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both signed by Iran, entitle everyone, including Bahá’ís, to manifest and practice their beliefs and to pursue education and the essentials of life. Yet, the reality for most Bahá’ís is that they have been restricted from doing so, and in some cases entirely deprived of being able to pursue educational opportunities available within the country.

The history of exclusion

Shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, large numbers of Bahá’í youth and children were expelled from their schools. The expulsions spanned the entire education system: at the primary and secondary levels, the expulsions were not systematic and focused mainly on children who were most easily identified as Bahá’ís; at universities, the ban was almost total.



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

In the 1980s, partly in response to international pressure, primary and secondary schoolchildren were allowed to re-enroll.

The government has, however, maintained the ban on the entry of Bahá'í youth into institutions of higher learning. Until 2004, the government used a simple mechanism to exclude Bahá'ís from higher education, requiring everyone who took the national university entrance examination to declare their religion. Applicants who indicated other than one of the four officially recognized religions in Iran—Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism—were excluded. 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.

Beyond 2004, the ban remained effectively in place, though its application has mutated and changed over time.

Harassment and exclusion in primary and secondary schools

Efforts to block the education and development of Bahá'í children have continued at the primary and secondary levels, even though students were gradually allowed to re-enroll after the 1979 expulsions. In recent years, there have been several incidents involving the harassment, or even expulsion of Bahá'í primary and secondary school students.

In 2007, for example, 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. 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 denigrated, distorted, and falsified Bahá'í religious heritage. They were also told that they should not attempt to “teach” or discuss their religion with other students. Frequently, being identi-



Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education microbiology lab, at an informal and temporary location, in 1995.

fied as a Bahá'í led them to be transferred to another school farther from their homes.

In February 2013, a Bahá'í high school student in Isfahan was severely beaten at school, verbally assaulted, and his religious beliefs were insulted by his teacher. When his family lodged a complaint, the teacher stated that he personally knew members of the Revolutionary Guard and security officials, so their claims would have no effect.

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. Officials from the Ministry of Intelligence became involved and threatened to hand the boy over to child welfare workers by having the father declared incompetent and arresting him. The boy was later transferred to another school.

School textbooks also grossly distort the Bahá'í Faith. For example, in history books used in the third year of junior high school and in the third year of high school, information is given about the Bahá'í Faith and its origins that is grossly prejudicial and aims to stoke hatred. Some of the books include the false claim that the Bahá'í Faith was created and supported by “foreign powers” such as the United Kingdom and Russia, supposedly with the purpose of generating disunity among Muslims in Iran, and aiming to destroy their faith in Islam. In other instances, history books, written by authors outside the country and detailing Iranian history, have been modified to omit entire chapters that reference the Bahá'í Faith.

Banned from higher education

One of the main features of the Iranian government'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 result is the same: thousands of young Bahá'ís have been denied university-level study.

In recent years, young Bahá'ís have been told that they have been “rejected” on account of not meeting the “general qualification” for university entry. Belonging only to a religion recognized by Iran's constitution, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or Zoroastrianism, is a general qualification stipulated on the education authority's website. Being a Bahá'í, a member of Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority, but one that is not recognized by the Iranian Constitution, is considered a dis-

qualification, and therefore excludes tens of thousands of motivated students from pursuing higher education. Losing the right to study at university, an unimaginably cruel fate, crushes the hopes and futures of countless young Iranian Bahá'ís.

In late 2003 and 2004, the government announced that it would drop the requirement to indicate religious affiliation on the application for the national university entrance examination. Bahá'í youth believed 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, 790 eligible Bahá'í students were denied university entry. Ten were permitted to enroll—yet they refused to take up their places out of solidarity with those who had been deprived.

A 2006 letter from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, sent to 81 Iranian universities, stated that if any students “are identified as Bahá'ís, they must be expelled from university.” This tactic has since deprived thousands of Bahá'ís access to higher education from university entry, whether by citing “incomplete” or “defective” files,

or through post-enrollment expulsions. In 2006, about 900 Bahá'í students sat for the university entrance 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, 1,037 Bahá'í students registered for exams. But, in an evolving ploy to block them from higher education, some 800 were told their files were “incomplete” and were thus prevented from matriculating. Of the remaining 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. The “application to expulsion” pipeline saw less than 1.7 percent of Bahá'í students who registered for entrance examinations make it through to graduation.



A group photo of Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education students with some instructors.



A home-based graduation ceremony for Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education students in December 2001.

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 within 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.” This 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.

In 2022, many young Iranian university students among the broader population, unhappy with the state of their country, staged protests and demonstrations. In yet another instance of scapegoating, the Iranian government responded by claiming that it was Bahá'í students who were fomenting the unrest. Yet, beyond the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith which do not permit contention or political protest by its followers, such an allegation was impossible as Bahá'í students had been systematically banned or expelled from universities. The false narrative crafted by the Iranian government represents yet another instance where the Bahá'ís were blamed for the general discontent within the country.

And in 2023, at the start of the academic year, yet another government tactic emerged. University hopefuls from the Bahá'í community—who had already passed the national entrance exam—were given declarations that asked them to renounce key aspects of their religious beliefs. The applicants were given a second document with questions on their personal information, a biography of the applicant, their families and relatives, their activities, and travels abroad. Entrance to university hinged on the applicants signing both forms. The measure was a clear violation of both the right to education and the right to freedom of conscience, religion, and belief.

Iranian officials deny that Bahá'ís are prevented from going to university. But the facts demonstrate a systematic, national policy of educational discrimination against Bahá'ís.

Hate speech and propaganda

The 1991 memorandum states: government agencies must “... counter the propaganda and religious activities of Bahá’ís.”

The 1991 memorandum states that government agencies must “counter the propaganda and religious activities of Bahá’ís.”

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, one of the most revealing examples of Iran’s strategy of persecution of the Bahá’ís includes a dramatic increase of anti-Bahá’í propaganda in official media.



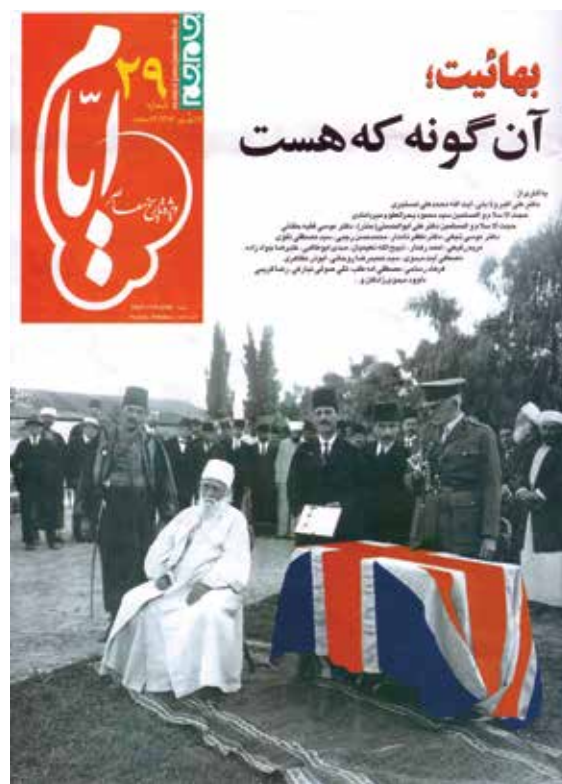
Anti-Bahá’í graffiti on a storefront in Iran.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the government has waged a relentless, anti-Bahá'í propaganda campaign in the media. The connection between the propaganda and the various forms of oppression already described are clear, with waves of violence following concerted outbursts of hate speech. Though the strategy has taken on a new dynamic, intensifying in recent years, anti-Bahá'í propaganda tactics have been present for decades and have directly stoked aggression against the community.

Hate speech has been used as a tool to incite violence against the Baha'is by the government and clerical authorities even prior to the Islamic Revolution. In 1955, the Iranian government broadcast on national radio a series of hateful speeches by a senior cleric, Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Falsafi. He lambasted the Bahá'ís, accusing them of being enemies of Islam and claiming that the Bahá'í Faith was a “false religion.”

In May of that year, the Minister of the Interior announced that orders had been issued for the suppression of the “Bahá'í sect.” There soon followed a convulsion of murder, rape, pillage, and destruction waged against Bahá'ís around the country. Seven Bahá'ís were murdered, Bahá'í holy places were desecrated, Bahá'í-owned shops and farms were plundered, the bodies of recently deceased 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 Muslim men.

The episode demonstrates several aspects of the history of the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran. First,



Cover of a 64-page anti-Bahá'í supplement to Jam-e-Jam, an Iranian daily newspaper, published 27 August 2007, on the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of the Twelfth Imam. The supplement carried misleading and inflammatory articles and interviews about the history of the Bahá'í Faith and false claims of political involvement with Zionism and colonialism. On the cover is a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh.

it shows the deep animosity that some members of Iran's clerical class hold against Bahá'ís. Second, it shows the extent to which various government officials have been complicit in spreading misinformation and hate speech and in supporting the persecution.

During the period since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979, the Iranian government has further developed its coordinated media network—which includes state television, radio,

news publications, websites, and now various social media platforms and accounts to disseminate disinformation, falsehoods, and accusations aimed at Bahá'ís with the intention of fomenting and spreading fear and hatred against them. The efforts have operated at industrial scales. The connection to the Iranian government is undeniable in a country where all significant media outlets are controlled by the state.

One particularly galling example of state-sponsored propaganda against the Bahá'ís came to light on 13 July 2022. Intelligence agents were already invading Bahá'í homes and arresting preschool teachers on that day; meanwhile, other agents entered a kindergarten in a major city in Iran and distributed Bahá'í books and pamphlets to its teachers, none of whom were Bahá'ís. The agents then instructed and forced the kindergarten staff to say, on camera, that Bahá'ís had brought these materials and distributed them to the teachers, attempting to frame the Bahá'ís as trying to convert Muslim children. Filming the staged teacher interviews also demonstrates that the authorities wanted to potentially use video footage to substantiate their false claims and sought to incite the public against the Bahá'í community.

The accusations and the reality

The Bahá'í Faith is known the world over as an independent world religion with teachings advocating progressive ideals such as equality for women and men. The Faith emphasizes obedience to government, non-involvement in partisan politics, and a commitment to promoting the betterment

of society. Its moral code asks followers to uphold the highest standards of integrity, chastity, honesty, and trustworthiness.

Yet, according to the picture painted by the Iranian media, Bahá'ís are “misguided” or “deviant” “Satanists” whose main concern is to overthrow the government through methods like the “corruption” of youth or spreading “propaganda against the regime.”

The Bahá'í Faith originated in 19th century Iran—yet Iranians are repeatedly told that it is a political invention of Great Britain or other colonial powers to subvert Iranian nationalism. Bahá'ís are also purported today to be aligned with “Zionist” Israel.

A growing number of examples of official and semi-official hate speech have been flagged within a coordinated network of hundreds of websites, Instagram accounts, Telegram channels, and Clubhouse rooms. This hate speech includes content such as “Bahá'ís are unclean and enemies of your religion,” “Associating with Bahá'ís is banned,” “Purchasing any goods from a Bahá'í store is forbidden,” and “The modern ‘Human Rights’ is a big lie.” Millions of Iranians have been targeted by such propaganda—which also include doctored images of Bahá'ís, the Founders of the Faith, and Bahá'í holy places. Such images are not only false, but are deeply disturbing, painful, and offensive to Bahá'ís. The increasing intensity of anti-Bahá'í propaganda is one of the most evident signs of the degree to which the Iranian government includes surreptitious as well as overt strategies of persecution—all the while never relenting in its ultimate goal of eliminating the Bahá'í community as a viable force in Iranian society.



Example of hate propaganda featuring the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, a holy place for Bahá'ís, with additional sinister imagery added by Iranian authorities.



Entrance to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, near Acre, Israel. Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to Ottoman Palestine in the 19th century and died there—leading later to the establishment of the Bahá'í administrative and spiritual center near that location.

A detailed examination by the Bahá'í International Community of anti-Bahá'í propaganda issued by the government or other government-controlled outlets point to several recurring hurtful and false themes.

THE ACCUSATION: That the Bahá'í Faith is a “misguided sect” or somehow associated with other “deviant” “cult-like” practices, such as Satanism, and that Bahá'ís are morally corrupt.

THE REALITY: Bahá'ís have a strict moral code and attach great importance to integrity and rectitude of conduct, as well as to the institution of marriage. One challenge is that the Bahá'í marriage ceremony is not recognized in Iran, where there is also no possibility of conducting a civil marriage. Consequently, Bahá'ís have been faced with the choice of denying their faith in order to be married according to the rites of one of the re-

ligions 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, which the government does not recognize 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.

THE ACCUSATION: That the Bahá'ís are anti-Islamic, actively working to undermine Islam.

This narrative often propagates mistruths that the Bahá'í Faith uses brainwashing to entice Muslims away from their faith.

THE REALITY: The Bahá'í Faith is widely recognized as an independent world religion—even

by Islamic scholars. Bahá'ís live in many other Muslim countries in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good relations. Moreover, Bahá'ís revere Muhammad and His Book, the Quran, as they do Jesus, Moses, Buddha, and the Founders of the other world religions. Indeed, alone among the followers of the world's other major independent religions, Bahá'ís recognize the station of Muhammad as a Prophet of God.

THE ACCUSATION: That the Bahá'í Faith was created by—or has a historic connection with—imperialist powers, specifically Great Britain or Russia, or that the Bahá'ís are agents of Zionism or spies for Israel and Western countries.

This is 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. Now, the claim of “Zionism” has been added to the list. Absurdly, in its official response to the March 2016 report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Human Rights Council, Iran also compared the Bahá'í Faith to Nazism.

THE REALITY: The birthplace of the Bahá'í Faith is in Iran, where it was founded in the mid-19th

century. Charges linking the Bahá'ís to the political project of Zionism are a lie and are based on a distortion of history. The Bahá'í Faith has its world headquarters in Israel because Bahá'u'lláh was sent as an exile to the Ottoman-controlled prison city of Akka, Palestine, in 1868 by two Islamic authorities—Ottoman Turkey and Qajar Persia—80 years prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. 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.

THE ACCUSATION: That the Bahá'ís were influential during the government of the late Shah of Iran and that, presently, the Bahá'ís are the instigators of rising opposition to the government.

Under this narrative, Bahá'ís are falsely accused of collaborating with SAVAK, the secret police during the time of the Shah, and the Bahá'í Faith is routinely described as a political organization opposed to the present Iranian government, thereby 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 demon-

strated this respect and obedience to the Shah's government, just as it does to the present government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Members of the Bahá'í community have obeyed 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 political activity. Iranian Bahá'ís therefore did not accept cabinet posts or similar political positions during the Shah's era, nor did they collaborate with SAVAK. On the contrary, the Shah's government also periodically targeted the Bahá'í community, 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 are deeply committed to its development. This is evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of Bahá'ís have remained in Iran despite the intense persecution directed toward them, as well as the fact that students who have been denied access to education in Iran and forced to study abroad have returned to assist in the development of their country.

A grotesque picture of Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority

The creation and maintenance of this grotesque picture of the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran is an ongoing project of the Iranian government, which has in recent years overseen the creation and dissemination of tens of thousands of pieces of anti-Bahá'í propaganda. This effort runs against international law—as already mentioned—yet that does not stop government officials from directly spouting anti-Bahá'í hatred. And it does not stop government-controlled media from disseminating hateful statements by religious leaders and others against Bahá'ís.

The tone of this propaganda is set by the very highest levels of government. In an October 2010 nationally broadcast speech, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei categorized Bahá'ís as “enemies of the Islamic Revolution.” And in 2013,

a series of fatwas issued by Ayatollah Khamenei declared that any interaction with Bahá'ís was unlawful.

Other recent anti-Bahá'í statements in the media, listed below, also demonstrate the hateful propaganda deployed against the Bahá'í community.

“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.

“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.

“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.

“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.



Fars News Agency quoting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: “Bahá'ís are unclean and enemies of your religion.”

“They are even more unclean than dogs.”

The demeaning treatment of Bahá'ís by Iranian authorities has remained a consistent theme throughout Iranian policy. Iran's religious leaders, for instance, have issued several 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 from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali 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.

“Bahá'ís are unclean and association with them must be avoided.” — Ayatollah Behjat, 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.

“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 in 2010.

“You should avoid any association and dealings with this perverse and misguided sect.”— Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a fatwa issued on 26 March 2018.



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.



Fariba Kamalabadi and Faezeh Hashemi, in 2016, meeting during Mrs. Kamalabadi's prison furlough. The two had become friends inside prison.

A courageous show of solidarity— not an “ugly and obscene act”

One event clearly depicts the disconnect between Iran's external posture and its internal policy toward Bahá'ís: a meeting between two friends in 2016, one a Bahá'í prisoner on furlough and the other a well-known Muslim.

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 who was out of prison for the first time in eight years on 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.

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

Mrs. Hashemi visited Mrs. Kamalabadi's home on 13 May 2016 to show her 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 thousands of articles and broadcasts, both in state-run and state-endorsed 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



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

Acts of violence following hate speech

As concerning as hate speech itself is, what is even more alarming is the link between incidents of hate speech and waves of violent actions against the Bahá'í community in the immediate period following those incidents. These assaults range from simple vandalism to murder. And the 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 property are likely undertaken with government complicity, following hateful remarks instigated by religious clerics or government officials.

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 Toubá Sabzehjou, and their daughter Azam Moodi. He then fled

the scene, leaving the family severely harmed. Mr. Moodi was injured in the abdomen. Mrs. Sabzehjou was cut in the neck. Both fainted from blood loss. Ms. Moodi, despite deep wounds of her own, was able to phone for help, and all three were soon taken to the hospital. In critical condition at first, they eventually recovered from the physical injuries, though the emotional torment they experienced, and perhaps continue to relive, can never fully be understood. The perpetrator has never been caught.

In July 2022, Iran's Ministry of Intelligence issued an appalling statement of oppressive hate propaganda against the Bahá'ís to justify raids on the homes and businesses of 52 Bahá'ís across Iran, as well as the arrest or imprisonment of 13 individuals. The Ministry of Intelligence issued a formal statement claiming the arrests were against members of the “Bahá'í espionage [political] party” and that those arrested were “propagating the teachings of the fabricated Bahá'í colonialism and infiltrating educational environments,” including kindergartens. The mention of kindergartens was an apparent pretext for the targeting of several Bahá'í preschool teachers.



Bahá'ís regularly face death threats through aggressive letters, anonymous phone calls, and face-to-face verbal intimidation. In 2008, for example, several Bahá'í families in Rafsanjan, 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:

[A Bahá'í-owned shop in Rafsanjan attacked by arsonists in October 2010.](#)



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

- 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 as well as 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.

The incident in Rafsanjan in 2008—plus at least two dozen other cases of harassment or threats against Bahá’ís there—occurred 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.

And of the many documented incidents of unprosecuted physical violence against Bahá’ís following instances of hate speech, there are at least nine shocking cases where Bahá’ís have been murdered or killed under suspicious circumstances with no further government inquiry into these situations.

- On 16 February 2007, an 85-year-old Bahá’í 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 sav-

agely 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 incident. Two of the individuals were killed and the third was hospitalized with serious injuries. Few further details are available about this incident, but no one is known to have been prosecuted for this attack.
- In February 2009, in the city of Yazd, an 82-year-old man disappeared after leaving home for a meal at a nearby restaurant. His daughter contacted government agencies for help to locate 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.
- Mr. Ataollah Rezvani was well-known as a Bahá'í in the city of Bandar Abbas and much respected for his honesty and helpfulness. Ministry of Intelligence agents, however, arranged for his dismissal from work and pressured him to leave the city. He had begun receiving menacing telephone calls from unknown persons and soon after was murdered in an assassination-style killing in August 2013. His killing came after senior local clerics incited the population against Bahá'ís in the city. The perpetrators were never caught.

- On 26 September 2016, Mr. Farhang Amiri was murdered outside his home in Yazd by two assailants who were brothers. One of the two was caught by local shopkeepers and the second apprehended later by the police. During their police interviews, they admitted to killing Mr. Amiri, and when asked about their motive one of the brothers said: “We wanted to kill a Bahá'í. I had heard that Bahá'ís are Muslims who have turned away from Islam, and they are apostates, and that shedding their blood is a meritorious deed.” The two brothers later added that they would kill another Bahá'í if released. Despite the admission of murder, and the stated intent to commit future murders of Bahá'ís, a court released the two men on bail.

Many more such incidents have no doubt gone unreported. In most countries, such threats and murders would have warranted police investigation. But no such investigations have been documented in Iran. These alarming incidents all reflect the degree to which hate crimes against Iranian Bahá'ís have been allowed to flourish in recent years—and the extent to which the authorities almost always fail to investigate these crimes or otherwise bring perpetrators to justice.

The need to address hate speech is increasingly recognized on the international stage. Commenting on the rise in hate speech over the years, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in 2019: “Hate speech is a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace. And as a matter of principle, the UN must confront hate speech at every turn. Silence can signal indifference to bigotry and intolerance, even as a situation escalates and the vulnerable become victims.”

With over a century and a half of abuse, and alarming intensifications of the persecution directed by the Iranian government over the last 44 years, the Bahá'ís have seen their leadership decimated, their friends and relatives harassed and imprisoned, their holy sites and cemeteries confiscated and desecrated, their economic fortunes dashed, and their young people blocked from educational advancement. Yet the Bahá'ís have responded, not with violence and outrage, but with quiet and constructive resilience, with efforts to contribute to Iranian society as well as social and economic development projects aimed at helping their fellow Iranian citizens.

HOW DO IRANIANS (BAHÁ'ÍS AND OTHERS) RESPOND TO THE PERSECUTION?

Constructive resilience

Despite the abhorrent treatment they face every day, the Bahá'ís in Iran still hold conviction in their purpose. Like other Bahá'ís in virtually every country around the world, they too are working to apply, within their own context, the framework guiding the affairs and initiatives of the worldwide Bahá'í community, which involves service to society as well as personal and collective development.

Central to their approach is a non-adversarial posture characterized by the principle of the oneness of humankind. This orientation finds its origins in Bahá'u'lláh's own example. He exhorted the Bahá'ís to exemplify kindness and concern for their community, even after being exiled to Baghdad by Qajar-era Persian government authorities. It was this posture that contributed directly to the building of trust among sympathetic government officials at that time.

The Bahá'í community's concern for advancing the well-being of their societies continued to take shape in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These efforts included contributions to modern medicine and agriculture in Iran, the development of modern schooling, and an increase in literacy levels, especially among young women and girls.

The global governing body of the worldwide Bahá'í community, the Universal House of Justice, has described the response of this community as one of “constructive resilience”—a

response to oppression that seeks “neither to succumb in resignation nor to take on the characteristics of the oppressor.” Not to be mistaken for blind acceptance or passivity, such a posture sees in adversity an opportunity to inspire greater forms of transformation and to contribute to the betterment of society.

The concept “constructive resilience” was brought into the public discourse by scholar Michael Karlberg, who observed that the Bahá'í community of Iran “has pursued a distinctively non-adversarial approach to social change under conditions of violent 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. 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.”

Site of the grave of an executed Bahá'í in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan province, at a Bahá'í cemetery that was destroyed by the Iranian authorities.



Courage, conviction, and action

In response to direct acts of persecution, Bahá'ís have demonstrated constructive resilience by courageously 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 businesses, or the denial of education. Their response to the destruction of their properties also demonstrates this spirit of resilience. In the village of Ivel, for example, Bahá'í farmers, whose homes were burned or demolished, continue to plant crops on their land—even though it is economically disadvantageous—to demonstrate that their purpose would not be thwarted by the actions of government officials.

The Bahá'ís of Yazd have exhibited great resilience on the numerous occasions that land allotted for their cemetery was demolished or confiscated, and they have repeatedly taken steps to restore the beauty of the land. The first piece of land, with a 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 and infertile location, the Bahá'ís worked hard to lend it a befitting spirit by planting trees that could thrive in the harsh terrain. 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.

Many Bahá'ís have also been told by government officials that if they simply said they were not Bahá'ís, they would suffer no mistreatment. By refusing to deny one's faith and seeking integration in Iranian society through active participation in civic life, the Bahá'ís have worked to claim equal citizenship and the requisite rights to which every Iranian citizen is entitled. They also do not seek to appeal for minority status, which reinforces norms and notions of separateness. The Bahá'ís in Iran instead call for the full recognition of their rights within a society to which they belong, and to which they are deeply committed.

A graduation ceremony for the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, in October 1995.



“Establish schools that are well organized, and promote the fundamentals of instruction in the various branches of knowledge through teachers who are pure and sanctified, distinguished for their high standards of conduct and general excellence, and strong in faith—scholars and educators with a thorough knowledge of sciences and arts” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education

Entire generations of Bahá'ís have been denied access to higher education in Iran to impoverish the community intellectually, economically, and psychologically. The policy is clearly designed to have a demoralizing effect on Bahá'í youth. Yet the community, inspired by the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, which places a paramount value on education, devised a creative and peaceful solution.

A notable example of constructive resilience can be seen in the creation of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE), an ad hoc, alternative university set up by the Iranian Bahá'í community in the 1980s to provide young Bahá'ís access to higher education, from which they had otherwise been barred by the government. The BIHE began by offering classes in private homes as well as via correspondence throughout the country, augmented by a scattering of specialized classrooms, laboratories, and libraries. By the late 1990s, the BIHE enrolled more than 900 students annually. The government, however, responded by temporarily shutting down the Institute in 1998; 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.



Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education students gather for a class in Tehran.



A group of Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education students gathered for a class.

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

In 2011, the government again moved to shut it down, this time arresting a dozen educators and administrators who supported the Institute's operation on the ground in Iran. In the following weeks, several more were arrested, bringing the number of BIHE-affiliated educators arrested that year to 19. Of those, 17 were ultimately tried and sentenced to terms of four or five years in prison. Their alleged crimes involved "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 authorities would go so far as to imprison 17 Bahá'í educators simply for trying to provide the educational opportunities that had 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.

Yet, BIHE's commitment to high academic standards, international collaboration, the pursuit of excellence, knowledge, and truth, together with an innovative teaching and learning environment, grew to be internationally recognized. Many of its students have been accepted into graduate-level programs in other countries. The initiative demonstrates a response characterized not by defiance, but rather by thoughtful collective self-empowerment and peaceful determination. And it still operates today.

Working for the betterment of Iran

The Bahá'ís in Iran have always striven to contribute to the betterment of Iranian society. Within their limited means, they have exerted efforts for the social and economic development of their wider communities, along with their fellow citizens. They have sought to contribute to the advancement of thought, including in the public discourse on human rights, exploring themes such as civil rights, the equality of women and men, as well as the removal of barriers facing minorities and other marginalized groups—all in a posture that avoids polarization.

Several constructive initiatives include:

- Efforts by a group of young Bahá'ís in the early 2000s to provide literacy tutoring for disadvantaged youth in poor neighborhoods in Shiraz. For their work, however, 54 individuals were arrested and detained. Three leaders of the group were sentenced to four years of imprisonment.
- Efforts to greet the families of prisoners with tea and sweets as they emerge from Evin Prison, including families of prisoners who are not Bahá'í.
- Efforts by a group of Bahá'ís to provide kindergarten-level education for young children in the aftermath of an earthquake in 2003 that destroyed much of the education system 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 to those who felt the shocks after an earthquake in East Azerbaijan province. At



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.

least three Bahá'ís were arrested for their efforts to help their fellow Iranians. Other Bahá'ís were warned against providing such humanitarian assistance.

- In May 2023 a woman commenced a five-year prison sentence after being convicted of charges including “propaganda against the regime,” “activities against the national security,” and “membership in the perverse Bahá'í sect.” Her crime was that she had provided educational assistance to Afghan children who were denied the right to study in Iran. This issue was cited among the accusations brought against her in the court and formed the basis of the verdict.

Many of these initiatives to contribute to Iranian society have met official resistance. Individuals have been arrested and their efforts portrayed as revolutionary acts of dissent. Yet the Bahá'ís continue to labor, confident that their actions will ultimately uplift the condition of their compatriots. 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 both the means and ends are always aligned.



Influential Iranians, human rights activists, journalists and a prominent religious leaders gather in an unprecedented show of solidarity to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the imprisonment of the seven former Bahá'í leaders in Iran.

A wave of support from fellow Iranians

A growing number of Iranians, both inside and beyond Iran and themselves not Bahá'ís, are questioning the hateful messaging propagated against the Bahá'ís and have defended the character and contributions of the community.

Iranians of all religious backgrounds are standing up for the rights of Bahá'ís or taking smaller, day-to-day actions—such as shopping at Bahá'í-owned stores or providing employment to Bahá'ís—to demonstrate their solidarity and their expectation that the government should show religious tolerance. These individuals have come to see that the

Bahá'ís, who continued to live their lives in adversity through peaceful and constructive resilience, 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 participate in the work of creating a better future for Iran. This is all the more true as many from among the wider population are also suffering some form of oppression within the country—as students and academics, as journalists and social activists, as artists and sports people, as progressive thinkers and proponents of women's rights, and as ordinary citizens.

In April 2016, for instance, family visitors of Bahá'ís unjustly held in Gowhardasht prison were met with kindness by a man, Mohammad Seifzadeh, and his wife. Holding a box of sweets, the couple greeted each Bahá'í as they came out of the prison after they had visited their family members. The couple's actions came at great risk to themselves. The man 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. During his time in prison, Dr. Seifzadeh had met many Bahá'ís and had been touched by their kindness and conduct. And so, it was with tears of joy, according to eyewitnesses, that Dr. Seifzadeh and his wife greeted the released Bahá'ís.

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.”

More recently, a growing number of activists inside Iran have 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 former leaders of the Bahá'í community; and Jila Baniyaghoob and Issa Saharkhiz, two prominent journalists who were previously in prison.

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, as mentioned, stirred a storm of anti-Bahá'í propaganda.



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.

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

Among the most notable 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. The quote depicts a paragraph from Bahá'u'lláh's *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*—“Most Holy Book”—which reads:

Consort with all religions with amity and concord, that they may inhale from you the sweet fragrance of God, Beware lest amidst men the flame of foolish ignorance overpower you. All things proceed from God and unto Him they return. He is the source of all things and in Him all things are ended

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, and stated his hope that 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.”

This experience demonstrates the unique and powerful role religious leaders can play in building cohesive and resilient societies and in countering calls to division and violence.

And in 2023, another senior cleric, Molavi Abdulhamid, the Sunni Friday prayer leader in the city of Zahedan, spoke out several times in favor of the rights of the Bahá’ís.

Support from Iranians outside the country

In recent years, during awareness-raising campaigns organized by the Bahá'í International Community to challenge human rights crises in Iran around hate propaganda, property confiscations, historical executions, and the equality of women and men, a host of Iranian activists inside and outside the country have amplified the messages of the Bahá'í community.

In 2009, in a seminal move, 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 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.

And in the recent past, Iranian human rights activists and leaders outside the country, including Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, international lawyer Mehrangiz Kar, activist Ladan Boroumand, journalists such as Maziar Bahari, Arash Azizi, and Akbar Ganji, and student leader Ahmad Batebi, as well as public figures such as Nazanin Boniadi, have all expressed concern about the treatment of Bahá'ís.

Together, these expressions of support have been critical, not only in raising awareness about the situation of the Bahá'ís, but in providing a source of solace to Bahá'ís on the ground.



Shirin Ebadi, a prominent Iranian human rights lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate who defended the seven former leaders of the Bahá'í community at their trial. Dr. Ebadi has since been a consistent and leading Iranian supporter of Iranian Bahá'ís.

Where groups of individuals, indeed entire communities, are persecuted by their government on the basis of faith and have no national mechanisms for redress, it falls to the international community, including the United Nations and its agencies, to develop more effective systems to ensure their protection. It will be the responsibility of civil society organizations to spotlight and hold the Iranian government accountable for these gross violations of human nobility, the work of media platforms to take on these stories that often remain invisible, and the role of national governments to exert international pressure on those failing to uphold their internationally-agreed obligations.

**HOW CAN THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY SUPPORT THE BAHÁ'ÍS?**

United Nations human rights mechanisms

“The whole world marveled at the manner of their sacrifice.... The mind is bewildered at their deeds, and the soul marveleth at their fortitude and bodily endurance....” Bahá'u'lláh

Iran's treatment of Bahá'ís gained prominence on the international stage in the early 1980s, as the killings, imprisonment, and torture of Bahá'ís became more widely publicized. The case of the Bahá'ís in Iran was first brought to the international community by the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. 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.

In 1982, the first resolution on the situation of the Bahá'ís was adopted by the Human Rights Commission. Such expressions quickly moved up the UN system to the General Assembly, which has passed over 35 resolutions since 1985 expressing concern about human rights violations in Iran while specifically referencing the situation facing Iranian Bahá'ís—making it one of the UN's most enduring human rights concerns. Beyond the significance of this resolution for Bahá'ís, it represented the first occasion where a minority group suffering human rights violations had been specifically delineated in a General Assembly resolution. Before it was replaced by the Human Rights

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

UN bodies have also, over the years, appointed several 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.

A 1960 report titled “Study of Discrimination in the Matter of Religious Rights and Practices” initiated by Arcot Krishnaswami, Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination

and Protection of Minorities, opened the door for the engagement of NGOs accredited at the UN on issues related to freedom of religious belief, and provided a foundation for the adoption of resolutions and mandates condemning various forms of discrimination. The appointment of the Human Rights Commission's first Special Rapporteur on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief in 1986 also contributed to raising awareness around specific country violations. The reports of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief have continued to be important instruments documenting the experiences of the Bahá'ís.

In 2022, Ahmed Shaheed—in his final year as Special Rapporteur with this mandate—highlighted in his report titled, “Rights of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities in situations of conflict or insecurity,” the increasing insecurity faced by the Bahá'ís and stressed that: “State and non-State actors have exploited the identity of religious or belief minorities to further their political, economic, and military objectives.” The report stated that Bahá'ís in Iran have been targeted “through hateful rhetoric that seeks to mobilize the public against them and ‘legitimize’ policies and practices that

harm them.” The report said that targeting Bahá’ís in this way entrenched widespread “fear, suspicion, and discrimination ... leaving many members of the Bahá’í community feeling more fearful and exposed to violence.”

Dr. Shaheed’s report was also important in offering a number of concrete recommendations which included an appeal to UN member states to “recall their international human rights obligations towards religious minorities” including the Bahá’ís; the encouragement of relevant agencies within the UN system to “adopt a more cohesive and coordinated approach” in responding to the situation facing religious minorities; and a call for states and civil society to consider establishing new “platforms” to advocate for the rights of the Bahá’ís.



Ahmed Shaheed, former Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and on the freedom of religion or belief, who published numerous reports and statements about Iran’s Bahá’í community.

Statements of UN officials about Iran's treatment of Bahá'ís

“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 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 [and] among the most extreme manifestations of religious intolerance and persecution in the world today.” — Heiner Bielefeldt, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, 21 October 2011



Heiner Bielefeldt, former UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

“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, 6 March 2013

“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.” —Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur on minority issues, press release, 4 September 2014

“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, report to the Human Rights Council, 10 March 2016

“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, press release, 8 June 2016

“... members of the Bahá'í community have continued to suffer multiple violations of their human rights.... Despite the fact that they have been documented for years, these violations continue unabated and with full impunity, as shown by the release of the murderer of a Bahá'í ... thousands of Bahá'ís have been expelled from their jobs, with their pensions having been terminated, and have been banned from employment in the public sector.... Companies are pressured to dismiss Bahá'í employees, banks are forced to block the accounts of Bahá'í clients, and Bahá'í business licenses are either not issued, not extended, or deliberately delayed.”
—Asma Jahangir, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, 14 August 2017



Asma Jahangir, former UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

“The Special Rapporteur is concerned by the substantial violations of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities ... in particular the serious violations of rights consistently documented of members of the Bahá'í community within Iran.... Allegations of discriminatory policies and practices have been received with respect to the denial of the right to work and to earn a decent living; restriction of access to higher education; the closure of shops; and discrimination in policy owing to the fact that Bahá'ís do not constitute one of the three constitutionally recognized religious minorities in the country.” —Javaid Rehman, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, October 2018



Javaid Rehman, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

“Over the past 40 years, the Bahá'ís, considered to be the largest non-Muslim and unrecognized religious minority in the Islamic Republic of Iran ... have suffered from the most egregious forms of repression, persecution and victimization.”
—Javaid Rehman, July 2019

“The Bahá'í minority remained most severely persecuted, with a marked increase in arrests, targeting and victimization. The situation of more than a thousand Bahá'ís remained unresolved at various stages of the legal process. They

were either waiting for a ruling on their cases or the enforcement thereof, including cases related to forms of harassment, such as arbitrary arrests; imprisonment and ill-treatment; raids on homes and confiscation of personal belongings; temporary release in lieu of unjustly heavy bail guarantees pending the conclusion of their trials; expulsion from or denial of entry to universities; raids on, and sealing of, business premises or refusal to issue work permits; confiscation of properties owned by Bahá'ís; confiscation and destruction of Bahá'í cemeteries or continuous questioning of their ownership despite the presentation of legal deeds; prevention of the burial of deceased Bahá'ís; and many other instances that continue to entangle the Bahá'ís in the country's unjust judicial system.”
— Javaid Rehman, February 2023

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.



Nasrin Sotoudeh, a prominent human rights lawyer and defender of the Bahá'ís.

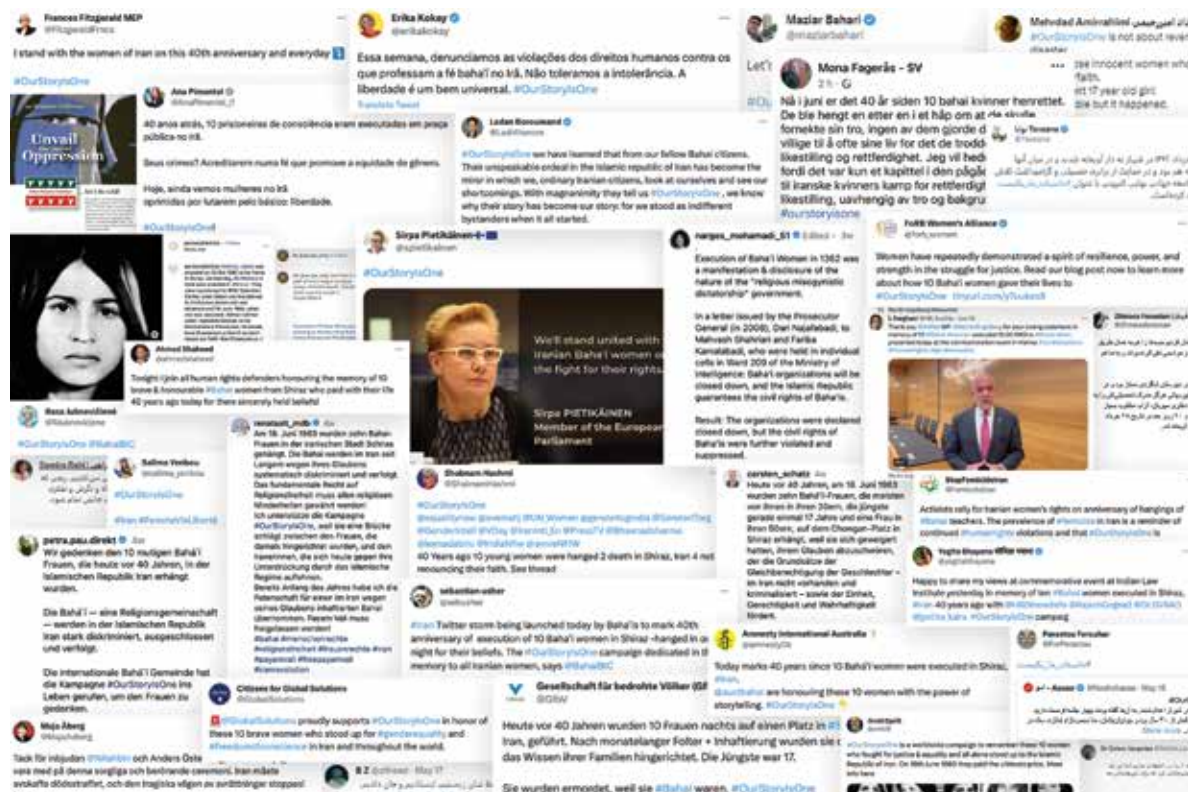
Other international entities and mechanisms

International and national agencies, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, have also risen to the defense of Iran's Bahá'ís. Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights, 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.

National statements and actions

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 recently 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.



#OurStoryIsOne: Dozens of prominent personalities gave their support to the campaign, including government officials, parliamentarians, UN officials, activists, journalists, artists, and human rights leaders around the world.

Media campaigns

Media outlets worldwide 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 India*, the *Times of London*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*. Other regional newspapers such as *Daily Vox* and the *Daily Maverick* in South Africa, *Folha de São Paulo* in Brazil, *Today's Zaman* in Ankara, Turkey, and the *Tribune* in Chandigarh, India, have also showcased the situation of the Bahá'ís. 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 BBC, CNN, and the Voice of America.

Moreover, prominent Iranian satellite broadcasters and websites, as well as 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, Olof Palme prize winner Parvin Ardalan, and famous blogger Arash Sigarchi. "We are all Iranian Bahá'ís," wrote Ali Keshtgar, a prominent Iranian thinker, in August 2008. In 2013, Mohammad Nourizad, a former hardline conservative columnist turned dissident, publicly displayed his regret for past actions by kissing the feet of a young child whose parents were imprisoned because of their Bahá'í beliefs, and telling him, "My little boy, I apologize to you on behalf of

all of those who, in these Islamic years, have made you and your [Bahá'í] fellows face injustice."

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. Significant as all these initiatives have been, there still is much work to be done by the international community if this religious minority and all who are oppressed within Iran are to be given their rights and the freedom to contribute to Iranian society.

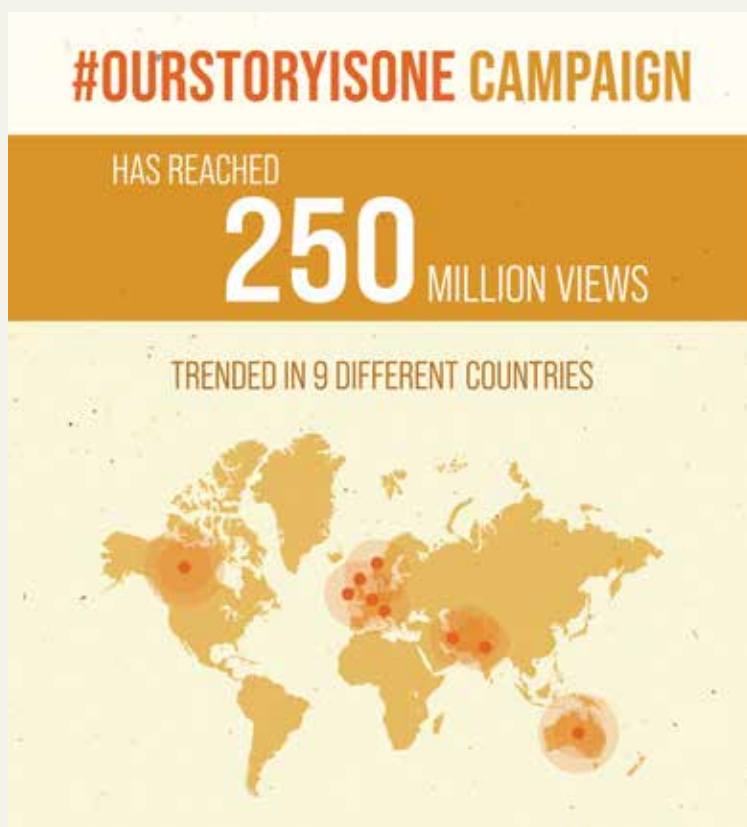


Mohammad Nourizad, a prominent Iranian who has supported the rights of the Bahá'ís, kissing the feet of a young boy whose Bahá'í parents were jailed by the government.

Recent media campaigns organized by the Bahá'í International Community have included the 2023 project #OurStoryIsOne, a groundbreaking initiative to commemorate the 1983 execution of the 10 Bahá'í women in Shiraz by linking their story to the wider struggle by all Iranian women for gender equality; the 2021-22 campaign #ItsTheirLand, which was launched to shine a light on the brutal confiscations and destruction of Bahá'í-owned properties in Iran; the 2021 #StopHatePropaganda campaign, which drew a link between official hate speech directed against the Bahá'ís and both official

and unofficial violence against the community; and campaigns started by allies of the Bahá'ís, such as the 2014–2017 #EducationIsNotACrime campaign which drew attention to the denial of higher education afflicting Bahá'ís and their peaceful efforts to create their own institution of higher learning. Some years earlier, the Five Years Too Many campaign was among the first of such initiatives organized by Bahá'ís and others in an effort to free the seven jailed Bahá'í leaders.

The #OurStoryIsOne campaign reached 250 million views in more than 33 languages. A two-hour social media event on 18 June 2023 trended in Iran as well as eight other countries across four continents, in Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.





Apolo Torres's São Paulo mural of a school girl reaching for books – and knowledge – with a snake at her heels. The mural was one of the most iconic and largest Education Is Not A Crime murals in the world.



In Salvador, the capital of the Brazilian state of Bahia, the artist Eder Muniz paints a vivid and enchanting mural in defense of the Bahá'ís of Iran.



Street art commissioned by Education Is Not A Crime, a worldwide campaign drawing attention to the constructive response of the Bahá'í community to the Iranian government's systematic denial of university education to young Bahá'ís.



#StopHatePropaganda was supported by numerous public figures from all walks of life.



#OurStoryIsOne: Television and print media amplified the exposure of the campaign worldwide. The reach of the campaign through traditional and online media was estimated at several hundred million people.



Above: The Education Is Not A Crime campaign used street art to call attention to the exclusion of Bahá'ís from higher education in Iran. Shown are murals in Brazil.

Below: A mural from the Education Is Not A Crime campaign, installed in Harlem, New York City, United States.





Above: #StopHatePropaganda: A global campaign calling Iran's government to end hate speech against the country's Bahá'í community.



Left: Exceptional solidarity: #StopHatePropaganda reached 88 million people, from diverse global communities and groups, in support of Iranian Bahá'ís.



#ItsTheirLand: A global campaign in support of the persecuted Bahá'ís in Iran generated an unprecedented outpouring of solidarity from officials at the United Nations and the European Union, statesmen, government officials, religious figures including Muslim leaders, lawyers, prominent human rights advocates, farmers' associations, actors, and other prominent figures.

The international community should demand concrete actions from the Iranian government instead of empty promises. Examples of such actions can include rescinding the 1991 "The Bahá'í Question" memorandum and ending all efforts to incite Iranians against the Bahá'í community. Iran's persistent persecution of the Bahá'ís necessitates sustained international scrutiny to restrain its discriminatory practices. Bahá'ís still face denial of educational and economic opportunities, property confiscations and destruction, imprisonment, false charges, and hate speech. International pressure in the past has had some impact, prompting the regime to modify its tactics, but more is needed.

**WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?
A CALL TO ACTION**

The international community should insist on deeds instead of mere words from the Iranian government.

History has shown that continued international attention is the best—and perhaps the only—method of restraining Iran’s clerical rulers from acting on their deeply held prejudices against Bahá’ís. Despite denials by government officials, all the evidence—from statistics about human rights violations, to Iran’s own internal policy documents—shows that Iran has not given up its broad, centrally-led effort to “block the development” of the Iranian Bahá’í community and to eradicate it as a viable entity.

Hundreds of Bahá’ís are either in prison, released on bail, or awaiting trial on fabricated charges such as “propaganda against the regime.” Incitements to hatred have also accelerated with tens of thousands of pieces of anti-Bahá’í propaganda saturating Iranian media for the past 10 years. All this has taken shape, even as the Iranian government knows that Bahá’ís refrain from partisan political activity, eschew all violence, and behave with obedience and respect toward the government.

But the record of the last 44 years has also shown that Iranian authorities care about international opinion, albeit less now than in the past, and that a requirement that they meet their obligations under international human rights law can have an effect. In the 1980s, for example, there is little doubt that international pressure by the United Nations, governments, and the world’s media helped to curb the wholesale killing of Bahá’ís, leading the regime to shift its tactics to social, economic, and educational repression. And today it is clear that the ongoing expression of concern may help to stay their hand from even worse forms of persecution.

The case for continued international pressure is clear. The Islamic Republic’s systematic persecution of Bahá’ís spans three generations, now affecting the grandchildren of those who were imprisoned or killed in the 1980s.

But can the international community prevent its impact on another generation? And as for the Islamic Republic, if its leaders want 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, a community that poses no threat to that government.

Concrete signs of such a move could involve the Iranian authorities' confirming to the international community that the 1991 "Bahá'í Question" memorandum has been rescinded and the country's laws are being reformed. The government should also end all efforts to incite hatred against Bahá'ís. Another indicator that could be observable to the international community would be for Iranian diplomats to realistically address the discrimination against Bahá'í Iranians, rather than denying that it occurs, or refusing to discuss the topic.

The most visible indicator of a genuine change would be the immediate release of all those Bahá'ís incarcerated in their prison system because of their beliefs, the acquittal of all those with pending prison sentences, and the cancellation of pending charges against hundreds of other innocent victims of oppression.

The Bahá'ís in Iran 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.

Archives of Bahá'í Persecution

The Bahá'í International Community established the Archives of Bahá'í Persecution to record the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran—in response to rising interest internationally and within Iran to understand the depth and breadth of this persecution. The documents shed light on the decades-long, systematic, and ongoing persecution of the Bahá'ís, instigated by the clergy and by the government.

More than 10,000 documents are included in the Archives and nearly 1,000 photographs.

Although most of the documents on this website are related to the decades following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, there are many that date back a long time prior to the Revolution.

They cover a wide range of persecutions, including systematic discrimination, arrest and imprisonment, execution, economic oppression, exclusion from education, acts of destruction and violence, and incitement to hatred. Over time, the archive will contain thousands of documents, mostly text documents, but also audio and visual records, many of which are being made publicly available for the first time.

Each document is available as a digital scan of the original and in a text-searchable format. All materials will, in time, be available in both Persian and English.



Visit the Archives at
<https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org> on the web.

ANNEXES

محمد ارجاع ریاست محترم جمهوری
و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱
قرعگی قرار گرفت و در تعلیم مذاکرات
انجلاپ فرعگی به ریاست مقام محترم
آمد و بود مختارات و اواخر اخیر مقام
جمهوری عالی رسید و با عتبات به مقام قانون
طونین و سیاستهای عمومی کشور مورد
تعمین و پیشنهادت است صحیح و مقبول
اواخر مقام عظیم الشان رهبری جمهوری
گفاری در سخن پیروز قاضی بفرمودند چه
بشرح زیر جمع بندی کرده و ریاست محترم
مسئله دانستن نتیجه مذاکرات و پیشنهاد

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 the Islamic Republic of Iran, this confidential memorandum is endorsed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah 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.
- A 21 September 2020 directive instructing local authorities in the city of Sari, in the northern province of Mazandaran, to “conduct strict controls” on the Bahá'ís in the city by “monitoring their operations”, and introduce measures to “identify Bahá'í students” to “bring them into Islam.”
- A 2023 form prepared by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, asking Iranian Bahá'í university applicants to sign forms denying key aspects of Bahá'í beliefs, and declaring personal information, as a requirement to be admitted to university.

شماره ۱۳۲۷/۱
تاریخ ۱۹/۱۲/۹۰
پروت

جمهوری اسلامی ایران
شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی

محترمانه

جناب آقای آیت الله العظمی محمد باقر
رئیس محترم دفتر مقام معظم رهبری



سلام علیکم

بمطابق ضمیمه و عطف به نامه شماره ۱/۷۸۲/۱۰ مورخ ۹/۱۰/۱۰ و دائره ابراهام مقام معظم رهبری به ریاست محترم جمهوری در رابطه با پیشنهاد به استحضار رسید. حسب ارجاع ریاست محترم جمهوری رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی موضوع جهت طرح و بررسی در دستور جلسه ۱۲۸ مورخ ۱۱/۱۱/۹۰ و ۱۱۹ مورخ ۹/۱۱/۹۰ شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی قرار گرفت و در نتیجه مذاکرات وراثتی که در جلسه ۱۱۲ مورخ ۲۲/۵/۹۰ 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 تعیین و پیشنهاد هیاتت مسیح و متحول در سربورد با مسائل مذکور و با عطف توجه خاص به اواخر مقام معظم رهبری جمهوری اسلامی ایران دائره بر آنکه "در این رابطه سیاست گذاری دوستانه نباشد بلکه باید پیشرو باشد" ماحصل مذاکرات و پیشنهادات مطرح زیر جمع بندی گردید و ریاست محترم جمهوری و رئیس شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی ضمن مساعدت دانستن نتیجه مذاکرات و پیشنهادات مقرر فرمودند مراتب به استحضار مقام معظم رهبری رسانده شود تا ضمن اternادات لازم به ترتیب که صلاح دید میفرمایند عمل شود.

جمع بندی نتایج مذاکرات و پیشنهادات

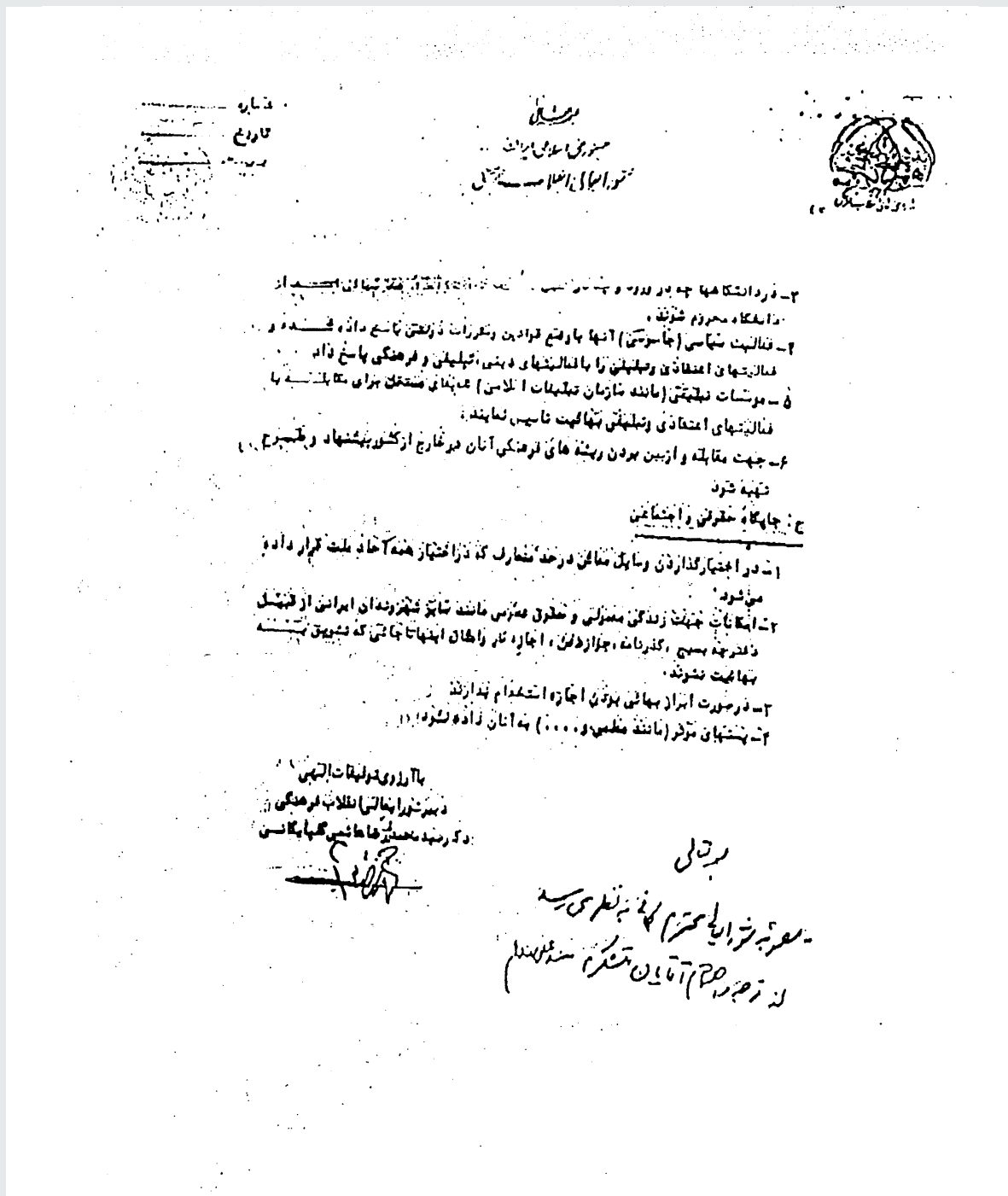
الف: جایگاه کلی بهائیان در نظام مملکتی

۱- به بین جهت آنان از مملکت اخراج نمی شوند
۲- در دلیل آنان دستگیر، زندانی و با مجازات نمی شوند
۳- به برخورد نظام با آنان باید طوری باشد که راه گری و توسعه آنان محدود شود.

ب: جایگاه فرهنگی

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

Continued next page



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: ۳۳/۲/۴۷/۸۵
تاریخ: ۲ - ۱۳۸۵
پیوست: سلامتی رهبر

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

با سلام و صلوات بر محمد و آل محمد (ص) و ضمن عرض تسلیت به مناسبت شهادت مولی الموحدين امیر مؤمنان (ع) و با آرزوی قبولی طاعات و عبادات، پیرو گزارشات واصله از فعالیتهای و تشکیل جلسات مخفیانه فرقه های ضاله بهائیت و بابت 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 ذیبط ابلاغ فرمایید تا بر مبنای 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 دود شناسایی - جنورت آیت الله شاهرودی جهت اطلاع و اقدام لازم.

رئیس محترم دفتر مقام معظم رهبری - در تبع تبعی جهت اطلاع.

رئیس ستاد کل نیروهای مسلح
سرلشکر سپنجی دکتر سید حسن لیروز آبادی

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

Persian text of the 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.

جمهوری اسلامی ایران
وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فناوری

محرمانه

شماره: ۹۳۷۵/۹۳
تاریخ: ۱۳۸۶/۰۵/۲۴

مهریت محترم حرامست:

۱- دانشگاه اصفهان ۲- دانشگاه ارومیه ۳- دانشگاه اصفهان ۴- دانشگاه ایلام ۵- دانشگاه الزهراء (س)
۶- دانشگاه بوعلی سینا ۷- دانشگاه تبریز ۸- دانشگاه تهران ۹- دانشگاه تربیت مدرس ۱۰- دانشگاه تهران ۱۱- دانشگاه تهران ۱۲- دانشگاه تهران ۱۳- دانشگاه تهران ۱۴- دانشگاه تهران ۱۵- دانشگاه تهران ۱۶- دانشگاه تهران ۱۷- دانشگاه تهران ۱۸- دانشگاه تهران ۱۹- دانشگاه تهران ۲۰- دانشگاه تهران ۲۱- دانشگاه تهران ۲۲- دانشگاه تهران ۲۳- دانشگاه تهران ۲۴- دانشگاه تهران ۲۵- دانشگاه تهران ۲۶- دانشگاه تهران ۲۷- دانشگاه تهران ۲۸- دانشگاه تهران ۲۹- دانشگاه تهران ۳۰- دانشگاه تهران ۳۱- دانشگاه تهران ۳۲- دانشگاه تهران ۳۳- دانشگاه تهران ۳۴- دانشگاه تهران ۳۵- دانشگاه تهران ۳۶- دانشگاه تهران ۳۷- دانشگاه تهران ۳۸- دانشگاه تهران ۳۹- دانشگاه تهران ۴۰- دانشگاه تهران ۴۱- دانشگاه تهران ۴۲- دانشگاه تهران ۴۳- دانشگاه تهران ۴۴- دانشگاه تهران ۴۵- دانشگاه تهران ۴۶- دانشگاه تهران ۴۷- دانشگاه تهران ۴۸- دانشگاه تهران ۴۹- دانشگاه تهران ۵۰- دانشگاه تهران ۵۱- دانشگاه تهران ۵۲- دانشگاه تهران ۵۳- دانشگاه تهران ۵۴- دانشگاه تهران ۵۵- دانشگاه تهران ۵۶- دانشگاه تهران ۵۷- دانشگاه تهران ۵۸- دانشگاه تهران ۵۹- دانشگاه تهران ۶۰- دانشگاه تهران ۶۱- دانشگاه تهران ۶۲- دانشگاه تهران ۶۳- دانشگاه تهران ۶۴- دانشگاه تهران ۶۵- دانشگاه تهران ۶۶- دانشگاه تهران ۶۷- دانشگاه تهران ۶۸- دانشگاه تهران ۶۹- دانشگاه تهران ۷۰- دانشگاه تهران ۷۱- دانشگاه تهران ۷۲- دانشگاه تهران ۷۳- دانشگاه تهران ۷۴- دانشگاه تهران ۷۵- دانشگاه تهران ۷۶- دانشگاه تهران ۷۷- دانشگاه تهران ۷۸- دانشگاه تهران ۷۹- دانشگاه تهران ۸۰- دانشگاه تهران ۸۱- دانشگاه تهران ۸۲- دانشگاه تهران ۸۳- دانشگاه تهران ۸۴- دانشگاه تهران ۸۵- دانشگاه تهران ۸۶- دانشگاه تهران ۸۷- دانشگاه تهران ۸۸- دانشگاه تهران ۸۹- دانشگاه تهران ۹۰- دانشگاه تهران ۹۱- دانشگاه تهران ۹۲- دانشگاه تهران ۹۳- دانشگاه تهران ۹۴- دانشگاه تهران ۹۵- دانشگاه تهران ۹۶- دانشگاه تهران ۹۷- دانشگاه تهران ۹۸- دانشگاه تهران ۹۹- دانشگاه تهران ۱۰۰- دانشگاه تهران

موضوع: ممنوعیت تحصیل افراد بهائیان در دانشگاهها

باسلام

احتراماً، به آگاهی میرساند، براساس مصوبه شماره ۱۳۳۷/ش/ت مورخ ۶۹/۱۲/۶ شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی و اعلام مراجع ذیصلاح امنیتی، ناخواص بهائیان چنانچه در حین ورود به دانشگاه و یا حین تحصیل مشخص گردند که بهائیان هستند، می بایست از دانشگاه اخراج گردند. لذا ضروری است نسبت به جلوگیری از ادامه تحصیل یا اشتغال سرموافق اقدام لازم بعمل آید. نتیجه را به این مرکز منعکس فرمائید

امیر ارغوی
مدیرکل حفاظت مرکزی
۱۳۸۶/۰۵/۲۴

[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 Revolutionary Cultural Council and the notification of the responsible authorities of the Intelligence [Office], if Bahá'í individuals, at the time of enrolment at university 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 [individuals] 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. Urúmíyyih [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 [Shahrekd] 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 Technology
30. Sháhrúd [Shahrud] University of Technology
31. Khájíh Nasirú'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 Ashrafi 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

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

باصدارت بر محمد، وآل محمد (ص) و با احترام، به استناد دستورالعمل واحداه از رویاست محترم پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی ناجا - نظارت بر اماکن عمومی (بشماره ۱۴۳۰/۵/۲۳۱ و ورخه ۸۵/۱۲/۲۱) و باعنایت به افزایش مراجعات وایستگان 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 وسازمانهای 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 وجمع 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 (فرهنگی، تربیانی، اقتصادی، نظیر جراید و نشریات، جواهر و طلا سازی وساعت و چاپخانه داران، وکسب و سازان، موسسات توریستی و اتومبیل کرایه، ناشران کتابفروشان، مسافرخانه داران، هتلداران، آلودنگاههای خیابانی، عکاسی، 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 موادغذائی ۴- چلوکباب و چلو خورشت ۵- قهوه خانه ۶- فروشندگان موادپروتئینی وسوپر مارکت ۷- بستنی و آبمیوه و نوشابه ۸- قنادی و شیرینی فروشی ۹- کافه، شاپ، پرونده صادر نمیگردد.

۱۳۸۶/۲/۱۰

[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, jewellery 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 تاریخ: ۱۷/۳/۹۵ پیوست:		بسمه تعالی
---	---	------------

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 ذریعہ اطلاع رسانی کتبی 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 توجه به 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: Bahaism

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]
Dáná'í [Danaie]

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

<p>بسمه تعالی</p> <p>اتحادیه صنف یونیک شهرستان سمنان</p>	
<p>تاریخ: ۸۸/۵/۲۴</p> <p>شماره: [REDACTED]</p> <p>پیوست: [REDACTED]</p>	

[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
۱۳۸۷/۰۸/۲۴

استان سمنان
اداره نظارت بر اماکن عمومی
تلفن ۳۲۴۰۰۰۰
پست ۳۶۱۴۱۱۱

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.]



دادگستری جمهوری اسلامی ایران

شماره دادنامه: [REDACTED]
شماره پرونده: [REDACTED]
شماره پایگانی شعبه: [REDACTED]
تاریخ تنظیم: [REDACTED]
پیوست: [REDACTED]

«فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْبَيْتَ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا»

شعبه ۱۰۱ دادگاه عمومی (جزایی) بخش لالجین

شماره دادنامه: [REDACTED]
شماره پرونده: [REDACTED]
شماره پایگانی شعبه: [REDACTED]
تاریخ تنظیم: [REDACTED]
پیوست: [REDACTED]

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 مبالغ 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 مصله 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 دو روز پس از ابلاغ قابل اعتراض و تجدیدنظر خواهی در محاکم تجدیدنظر استان همدان است.

برای - رئیس شعبه اول دادگاه بخش لالجین

[Signature]

رونوشت برابر با اصل امارتست. مدیر دفتر دادگاه عمومی لالجین

[Signature]

شاکی: لالجین

English translation of a 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 Nádirí 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 Nádirí 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

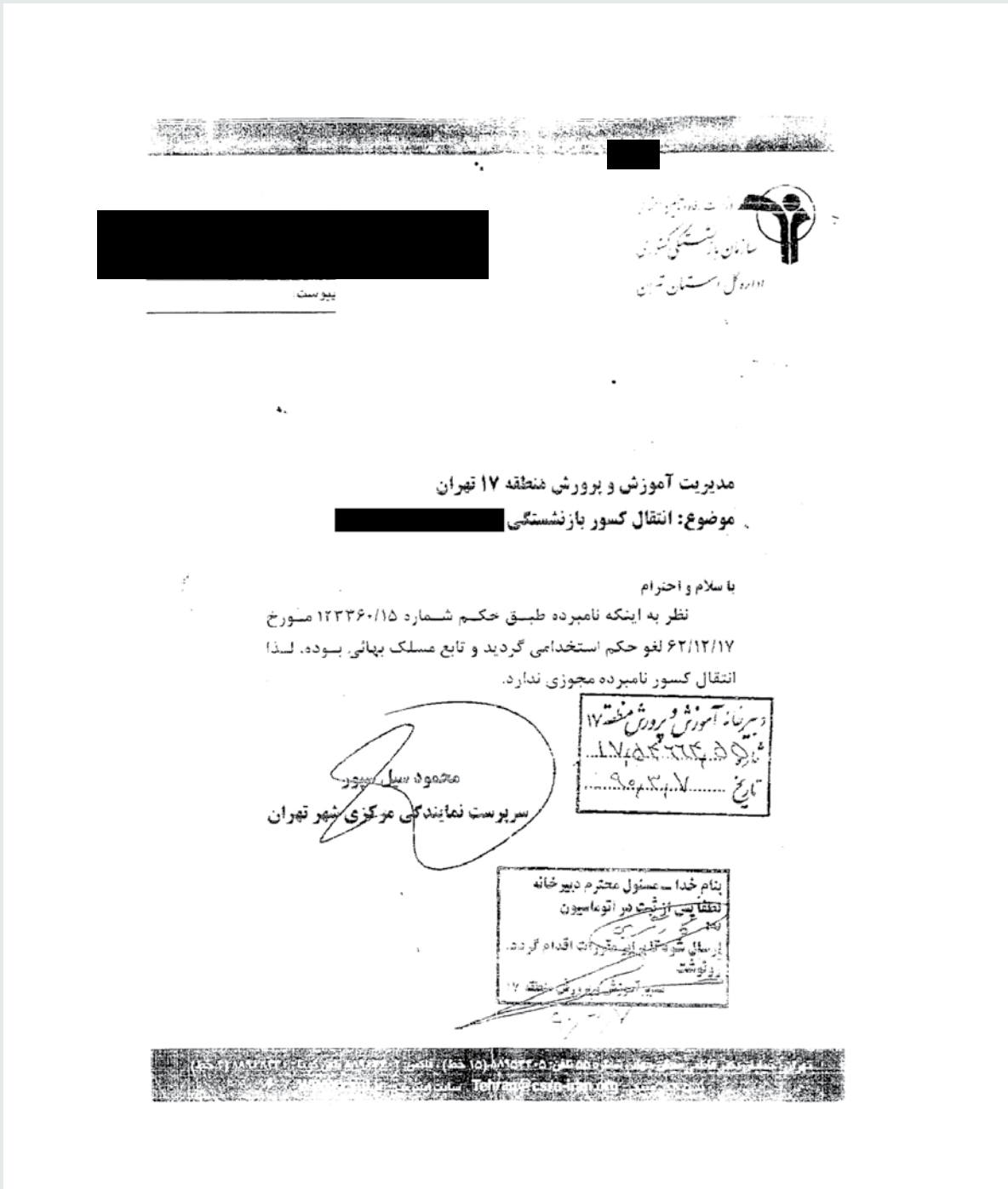
Peace be upon you!

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.



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

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'ís 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'ís 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'ís 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'ís be prevented.

اتحادیه صنف فروشندگان
لوازم یدکی اتومبیل کرج
شماره ثبت ۲۰

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

بسمه تعالی

رئیس محترم اتحادیه فروشندگان لوازم یدکی اتومبیل کرج
موضوع: عدم صلاحیت فرقه بابیت
سلام علیکم

لوحه ای که در روز ۱۱۹۵۰ مورخه ۹/۹/۸۷ در دسترس نماینده کتب از فرقه بابیت که
مورد تأیید اداره محترم است. کسر قرار نمی گیرند و دارای فعالیت می باشند و تاکنون هیچ
پایه ای که در آنجا فعالیت می کنند و به واسطه این موارد نمایندگان تاکنون که مراتب به
در این دست راست لازم جهت جلوگیری از فعالیت تا بهرگاه و در غایت این

رئیس اتحادیه فروشندگان لوازم یدکی اتومبیل کرج
[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 Qásimzádh [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 ضالۀ بهائیت

سؤالات مطرح شده :

۱) آیا بهائیت ضالۀ 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 ضالۀ و مضلۀ اجتناب کنید.
 ۱) به کاملاً منحرف هستند.
 ۲) به نجس هستند.
 ۳) چون موجب انحراف و گمراهی مردم می شود اجازۀ تبلیغ ندارند.

• **حضرت آیت ا... نوری همدانی**
 ۱) فرقه ای ضالۀ 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 ضالۀ حرام است چون بهائیان نجس و کافر هستند .

• **حضرت آیت ا... وحید خراسانی**
 ۱) به
 ۲) نجس هستند چون کافرند .
 ۳) اجازه تبلیغ فرقه منحرف و ضالۀ 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 انتظام 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 کلایبکائی**
 به نحوی که حضرت آیه اله العظمی آقای بروجردی قدس سره مرقوم فرموده اند لازم است مسلمان نسبت به این فرقه ضالۀ معاشرت و معامله را ترک کنند و از عموم مسلمان تقاضا داریم آرامش و حفظ انتظام را رعایت نمایند . خداوند متعال همه را از شروری و فتن آخر الزمان حفظ فرماید .

• **نظر دانشمند ارجمند، حضرت حاجی الاسلام شیخ حسین انصاریان پیرامون فرقه ضالۀ 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 میبویستند. 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 جاسوسان دنیای و طعم 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 دین محمدی (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 هذّاهای 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 موهبۀ 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.

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM persian]

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

List of religious enquiries, 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.

وزارت کشور انضمامی سازمان فرماندهی شهرستان ماری	جلسه کمیسیون قوام فرق و مذاکره شهرستان ماری	روز / تاریخ برگزاری: ۹۶/۳/۲۱ ساعت شروع: ۹:۱۵ صبح ساعت پایان: ۱۰:۳۰ صبح مکان برگزاری: فرمانداری شهرستان سار	تعداد اعضای جلسه: ۱۸ تعداد اعضای غیر حاضر:
دسته کار جلسه:			
بررسی آخرین وضعیت درآویش و فرقه ضاله بهائیت			
عیادت مطرح شده در جلسه (آوارشها، ناکیده ها، رزمورها و ...)			
<p>جلسه موضوع با حضور اعضای محترم و به ریاست جناب آقای بابایی سرپرست ست معاونت سیاسی، امنیتی و اجتماعی این فرمانداری و با تلاوت آیاتی از چکام از کتاب الله مجید در محل این فرقه نداری برگزار گردید.</p> <p>در این جلسه پس از تشریح دستور کار جلسه توسط آقای لطیف رئیس محترم اداره سیاسی، امنیتی و اجتماعی ارائه گزارش آماری و موضوعات مرتبط با دستور کار جلسه توسط اعضاء محترم، جلسه جمع بندی بعمل آمد.</p> <p>توسط ریاست محترم جلسه مبنی بر کنترل دقیق تحرکات فرقه ضاله بهائیت و د اویش، برنامه ایزی های آن در حوزه دستگاههای فرهنگی و آموزشی جهت شناخت عوامل و کادر مربوطه رای کنترل هائی لازم در دسترس است.</p> <p>تصمیماتی به شرح ذیل اتخاذ گردید:</p>			
ردیف	متن مصوبه	مسئول پیگیری و اجرای مصوبه	مدت زمان انجام اقدامات
۱	<p>در راستای کنترل تحرکات سوء فرقه ضاله بهائیت، مقرر گردید:</p> <p>الف: جامعه اطلاعاتی، امنیتی و انتظامی، کنترل های دقیق در سطح شهرستان در جهت جلوگیری از تحرکات آنان، نوع سرویس دهی به شبکه ها و سایت های معاندین، جلسات خصوصی و عمومی و سایر ساز و کارهای آنان، معمول نمایند.</p> <p>ب: آموزش و پرورش نواحی ۱ و ۲ سازی نسبت به افزایش آگاهی مدیران مدارس و معلمان پرورشی در جهت جلوگیری نگاه به دانش آموزان برای جذب آنان به دین اسلام و اقدام نماید ضمناً با بیش بینی فرصت های لازم نسبت به شناسایی دانش آموزان بهائی اعلام کرده.</p> <p>ج: سایر اعضاء محترم بر اساس نوع فعالیت بهائیان در سطح شهرستان، نهضیات پیشگیرانه و کنترلی در حوزه مسئولیت با هماهنگی جامعه اطلاعاتی و امنیتی اقدام نمایند.</p> <p>د: با توجه به عدم تمیز تحصیل بهائیان در سطح دانشگاهی، تأکید گردد کلیه دانشگاههای مستقر در مرکز استان با پیش بینی فرصت ها و نیازات های بایسته، نهضیات بایسته را معمول نمایند.</p> <p>ح: اداره صنعت، معدن و تجارت کنترل های لازم درخصوص نحوه فعالیت بهائیان حوزه بازار با هماهنگی پلیس اطلاعات اقدام نمایند.</p>	<p>- ج. محمد امینی و</p> <p>- انتظا</p> <p>- ست. معدن و</p> <p>- تجر</p> <p>- راه زش و پرورش</p> <p>- نوای ۱ و ۲</p> <p>- بهائیان</p> <p>- شگاهها</p>	۳ ماه

Annexes | 147

شماره: ۷۵۱/۲ - ۸۰۵
تاریخ: ۷/۲/۷۹
موضوع: ...

جمهوری اسلامی ایران

استاد ارشد آموزش عالی
فرماندهی شهرستان ساری

(شماره جیش تولید)

حلی: به عطفه - آتی

رئیس محترم اداره اطلاعات شهرستان ساری
فرمانده محترم ناحیه مقاومت بسیج سپاه شهرستان ساری
فرمانده محترم نیروی انتظامی شهرستان ساری
فرمانده محترم پلوا انتظامی عازمندان
رئیس محترم اداره صنعت، معدن و تجارت شهرستان ساری
مدیریت محترم اداره میراث فرهنگی، صنایع دستی و گردشگری شهرستان ساری
مدیریت محترم آموزش و پرورش ناحیه یک ساری
مدیریت محترم آموزش و پرورش ناحیه دو ساری
مدیریت محترم کلیه دانشگاهها و مؤسسات آموزش عالی، بیشتر در مرکز استان

سلام علیکم

با احترام، به پیوست تصویر صورت جلسه کمیسیون اقوام، قزاق و مذاهب شهرستان ساری مورخ
۹۹/۶/۳۱ جهت اقدام بایسته عضویت حسب مورد و اعلام نتیجه ارسال میگردد. (ب. ۱۳۰۵/۱۲/۱۹۹۹)

عباسعلی رضایی
فرماندار شهرستان ساری
لر

۲-۱۲۵
۹۹/۶/۳۱

English translation of an official Iranian directive, dated 21 September 2020, instructing local authorities in the city of Sari, in the northern province of Mazandaran, to “conduct strict controls” on the Bahá’ís in the city by “monitoring their operations”, and introduce measures to “identify Bahá’í students” to “bring them into Islam.”

Mazandaran Governorate General

Governorate of the City of Sari

Meeting of the Commission on Ethnicities, Sects and Religions in the City of Sari Date of meeting:
21 September 2020

Start Time: 9:15 a.m.

End Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location of meeting: The governorate of the City of Sari

Number of members present: 19

Number of absentees:

Agenda: reviewing the latest status of the Dervishes and the subversive Baha’i sect

Topics discussed in the meeting (reports, highlights, guidelines, letters)

The said meeting was held with esteemed members present and chaired by Mr. Babaie, the Deputy Governor for Political, Security and Social Affairs and began with the recitation of some verses from the sacred Quran at the governorate.

At this meeting, following a review of the agenda by Mr. Lotfi, the honourable Head of the Political, Security and Social Affairs Department, and after a presentation of the statistical report and issues related to the agenda by the honourable members, the issues were summed up by the honourable chairman. It was decided that the movements of the subversive Baha’i sect and the Dervishes are to be rigorously controlled as well as a detailed plan to be adopted with regard to cultural and educational institutions. In order to make the relevant arrangements and identify the personnel for the required controls and the allocation of responsibilities, the following decisions were made:

Text of the resolution

To control the misguided movements of the subversive Baha’i sect, it was decided:

A- The intelligence, security and law enforcement community should conduct strict controls at the county level by monitoring their operations, the type of services provided to the networks and websites of enemies, private and public meetings, and their other activities.

Responsible for following up and implementation of the decree: The Security and Law Enforcement Community

Duration [illegible] and implementation of the decree: [Illegible]

B- Departments of Education in Districts 1 and 2 of Sari shall increase the level of alertness and awareness among school principals and educators on their handling of Baha’i students in order to win them to Islam. Furthermore, efforts shall be made to identify Baha’i students.

Responsible for following up and implementation of the decree: Education Departments in Sari Districts 1 and 2

Duration [illegible] and implementation of the decree: [Illegible]

Continued next page

C- Based on the type of Baha'i activities in the city, other honourable members shall take deterring and controlling measures in the area of [their] responsibility in coordination with the intelligence and security community.

Duration [illegible] and implementation of the decree: [Illegible]

D- With a view to the ban on Baha'i education at the university level, it was emphasized that all universities located in the centre of the province shall anticipate the opportunities, undertake the necessary surveillance, and take the necessary measures.

Responsible for following up and implementation of the decree: Universities Duration [illegible] and implementation of the decree: [Illegible]

E- The Department of Industry, Mines and Commerce shall take the necessary controls over the activities of the Baha'is in the Bazaar area in coordination with the intelligence police.

Responsible for following up and implementation of the decree: Department of Industry, Mines and Commerce

Duration [illegible] and implementation of the decree: [Illegible]

Ministry of Interior
Mazandaran Governorate General Governorate of the City of Sari
[Emblem]
Islamic Republic of Iran

Case Number: [Illegible] / 25/10/700 Date: 27 September 2020

Enclosure: ----((Year of Leap in Production)) Highly confidential - Immediate

Esteemed Head of the Intelligence Department of the City of Sari
Esteemed Commander of the Basij Resistance [Force] in Sari
Esteemed Commander of the Sari Police Force
Esteemed Commander of the Mazandaran Police Force
Esteemed Head of the Industry, Mining and Trade Department of the City of Sari
Esteemed Management of the Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Department of the City of Sari
Esteemed Management of the Education Department in Sari District 1 Esteemed Management of the Education Department in Sari District 2

Distinguished heads of all universities and higher education institutions located in the centre of the province

Greetings,

Respectfully, the minutes of the Commission on Ethnicities, Sects and Religions in the City of Sari, dated 21 September 2020, are enclosed for required action as the case may be and reporting back the outcome.

Abbas-Ali Rezaie Governor of Sari [Signed: On behalf of]
[Number illegible] 1 October 2020

بسمه تعالی

فرم شماره ۲

وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فن آوری

سازمان سنجش آموزش کشور

دبیرخانه هیأت مرکزی گزینش دانشجو

برگ تعهد نامه داوطلبین

تذکر مهم: تکمیل دقیق این برگ برای سیر مراحل گزینش داوطلبین محترم ضروریست

شماره پرونده	رشته امتحانی داوطلب	سال آزمون

اینجانب فرزند متولد / / ۱۳..... با کد ملی صادره از
 که بر اساس فرم شماره ۱ خود را بهایی و بهایی زاده معرفی نموده ام، در آزمون ورودی دانشگاه ها شرکت داشته و نتیجه
 انتخاب رشته اینجانب اعلام شده است؛ لذا متعهد می گردم کلیه قوانین و مقررات آموزشی را رعایت و از
 هرگونه اقدام تشکیلاتی و فرقه ای اعم از تبلیغ یا همکاری یا هیئت های متحله فرقه بهائیت پرهیز نمایم. اطاعت از قوانین و
 مقررات نظام را بر اطاعت از بیانیه ها، دستورالعمل ها و فرامین مرکزیت فرقه مستقر در سرزمین های اشدالی فلسطین
 موسوم به بیت العدل و با ولایتین آن ترجیح دهم.

امضاء اثر انگشت تاریخ

اینجانب فرزند متولد / / ۱۳..... با کد ملی صادره از

خود را مطیع محض بیت العدل به عنوان مرجع مصون و معصوم دانسته و متن فوق را نمی پذیرم .

امضاء اثر انگشت تاریخ

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

In the Name of the Almighty

The Ministry of Science, Research and Technology

Sanjish[1] Organization

The Secretariat of the Central Committee for Guzinish[2]

Form Number 2

Applicants Undertaking Form

Important Note: Accurate completion of this sheet is necessary for the selection process of the Applicants.

File Number Applicant's Examination Field Examination Year

I,, daughter/son of, born in .../.../13..., national identification smart card, issued by, have identified myself as a Bahá'í, born in a Bahá'í family according to form number 1. I participated in the National University Entrance Examination and the result of my field of study selection has been announced as..... Therefore, I make a pledge to observe all the education statutes and regulations, and to avoid all kinds of administrative and sectarian activities, including propagation or collaboration with the dissolved entities of the Bahaist Sect, and to prefer obedience to the statutes and regulations of the regime to obeying the statements, directives and the instructions from the centre of the sect, located in the occupied territories of Palestine, called the House of Justice, or its liaisons.

Signature

Fingerprint

Date

I,, daughter/son of, born in .../.../13..., national identification smart card, issued by, consider myself completely obedient to the House of Justice as an infallible authority and do not accept the foregoing text.

Signature

Fingerprint

Date

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