

PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

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Trial of seven imprisoned Baha'i leaders in Iran postponed

GENEVA – The trial of seven imprisoned Iranian Baha'i leaders has been postponed until 18 October, the Baha'i International Community learned today.

According to Diane Ala'i, the Baha'i International Community representative to the United Nations in Geneva, following a request for postponement of the trial from Mr. Hadi Esmaelzadeh and Ms. Mahnaz Parakand — attorneys from the Defenders of Human Rights Center who are representing the seven Baha'is — the court has decided to delay the hearing for two months.

Two senior members of the legal team, Nobel laureate Mrs. Shirin Ebadi and Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani, were unable to attend the hearing as Mrs. Ebadi is out of the country and Mr. Soltani is in prison, having been detained on 16 June 2009 in the wake of the civil unrest following the presidential election in Iran.

“Our hope now is that our seven innocent co-religionists will be released on bail,” said Ms. Ala'i.

The seven Baha'i prisoners are Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm. All but one of the group were arrested on 14 May 2008 at their homes in Tehran. Mrs. Sabet was arrested on 5 March 2008 while in Mashhad. They have since been held at Tehran's Evin prison without formal charges or access to their lawyers.

Official Iranian news accounts have said the seven are to be accused of "espionage for Israel, insulting religious sanctities and propaganda against the Islamic republic.”

The Baha'i International Community categorically rejects all charges against the seven, stating that they are held solely because of religious persecution.

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