

# Bahá'í International Community

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Member of former Yaran back in prison despite grave medical condition**

GENEVA - On 23 April 2018, Mr. Afif Naeimi, 56, was called back to serve the remainder of his prison sentence despite having persistent and severe health problems. He is one of the seven members of the former leadership group of the Baha'is in Iran known as the Yaran, who were jailed on false and baseless charges.

"The resumption of Mr. Afif Naeimi's prison stay, despite his grave medical condition and relevant Iranian legal provisions pertaining to his possible release, is deeply concerning", stated Ms. Diane Ala'i, the Representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations in Geneva. "Mr. Naeimi has repeatedly lost consciousness in prison due to severe heart problems and has been transferred to the hospital several times as a result."

Mr. Naeimi, who is married and has two sons, has endured serious health problems while in prison, without adequate treatment.

As a young man, Mr. Naeimi was unable to pursue his dream of becoming a medical doctor as Baha'is are denied access to a university education—a prospect which has been and continues to be faced by multiple generations of Bahá'is in Iran. Baha'is are also deprived of public sector jobs, their shops are sealed, their cemeteries are desecrated, they are vilified in state sponsored media, and they are arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned for their beliefs.

On 14 May 2008, Mr. Naeimi was arrested in an early morning raid on his home in Tehran because he was a member the Yaran, a former ad-hoc group which tended to the basic spiritual and material needs of the Iranian Baha'i community. The group was formed with the full knowledge and approval of Iranian authorities after formal Baha'i institutions were declared illegal in Iran in the 1980s. Even still, its members were all arrested in 2008.

All seven members of the Yaran were arrested in March or May of 2008 and spent months in detention before receiving their charges. They were eventually sentenced to 10 years in prison through a legal procedure that lacked any semblance of due process. All members of the former Yaran have completed their prison sentences and were eventually released except for Mr. Naeimi.