

**BAHÁ'Í  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY**

*United Nations Office*

866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120, New York, NY 10017 USA

Phone: +212-803-2500, Email: [uno-nyc@bic.org](mailto:uno-nyc@bic.org), Web: <https://www.bic.org>

**PRESS RELEASE**

Baha'i International Community

22 October 2015

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact Bani Dugal in New York at (office) 212-803-2500 or (mobile) 914-329-3020 or Diane Ala'i in Geneva at (office) +41 (-22) -798-5400 or (mobile) +41 (-78) -60-40-100

**Documentary shows trial of executed Baha'is**

NEW YORK – Previously unseen footage of the 1981 trial of members of the governing body of the Baha'i community in Iran has been broadcast for the first time as part of a documentary about Iran's judicial system. The members of that body were all executed by firing squad shortly after their brief trial.

The documentary, *Iranian Revolutionary Justice*, which was broadcast in English on BBC World News and in Persian on BBC Persian, explores the functioning and impact of “revolutionary courts” in Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. It includes interviews with family members of some of the Baha'is shown in the trial footage as well as experts on Iran and human rights. Individuals from two other groups who faced intense persecution and experienced the trials first hand are also featured.

“The Baha'is are not the only group who have been persecuted in Iran, although the injustices perpetrated against them have been systematic and part of the official government policy of Iran since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution,” says Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations in New York.

“The film shows a justice system that violates virtually every accepted element of due process, from arbitrary arrest and detention to closed trials and biased judges. The same system which executed Baha'is in the past continues to imprison them today.”

On 13 December 1981, eight members of Iran's National Spiritual Assembly—a nine-member elected national council that forms part of the Baha'i administrative structure in all countries—were arrested at their meeting in the home of a local Baha'i. Fourteen days later, on 27 December, all eight members were secretly executed by a firing squad.

The names of those executed were, Mr. Mehdi Amin-Amin, Mr. Jalal Azizi, Dr. Ezzatollah Forouhi, Mrs. Jinous Mahmoudi, Dr. Mahmoud Majzoub, Dr. Sirous Rowshani, Dr. Ghodratollah Rowhani, Mr. Kamran Samimi.

Families were not notified of their trial or executions. Their bodies were buried unceremoniously in barren land reserved by the government called Kufr Abad—the land of infidels.

The footage, recently discovered and now broadcast more than 30 years later, shows two hours of the trial of seven male members of the National Assembly. The eighth arrested female member, Mrs. Jinous Mahmoudi, does not appear to be part of the trial. However, she and the other seven members were executed at the same time.

“What I saw in the film can be summed up in one sentence: lack of a just trial,” says Dr. Shirin Ebadi, a prominent Iranian lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate who is interviewed in the documentary.

In the footage, seven members of the National Assembly are shown sitting in a row. For an approximate total of one hour and 30 minutes of the two hour video, the judge, who is not shown throughout the film, speaks of the accusations against the Baha'is, giving the seven defendants only 26 minutes to speak.

“The meaning of defense [in court] is not for the prosecutor to say to the defendant you must say this about this topic,” comments Ms. Mahnaz Parakand, another prominent Iranian lawyer who was herself imprisoned in Iran.

Throughout the court proceeding of the seven Baha'is, unfounded and baseless allegations are made against them and the Baha'i community. In one example, they are accused of defaming the name of the Islamic Republic internationally by providing the media with news of the expulsion of Baha'i students from schools.

“It is as if expelling Baha'i students from school for being Baha'i is a government secret,” says Dr. Payam Akhavan, a professor and a former Legal Advisor to the Prosecutor's Office of UN International Criminal Tribunals.

“The most ridiculous part is where the prosecutor even accuses those primary students who were expelled from school of being spies.”

The documentary highlights the lack of due process of law in Iran's justice system. This is shown in the absence of any legal representation or real evidence against the defendants, insufficient time to respond to accusations, biased judges, and pressure and even threats against lawyers who defend the accused.

In the case of the eight Baha'is, the footage ends before the conclusion of the trial and it is not known whether their sentence was pronounced in court. However, according to the verdict, all eight Baha'is were sentenced to death as well as the subsequent confiscation of their properties. They were executed on the same day as the trial.

“This documentary brings to light the baseless and absurd accusations for which Baha'is have been persecuted for over 30 years," says Ms. Dugal.

“To this day the government denies them even the most basic rights as citizens. The persecution is without justification and not even a single piece of documentary evidence has yet been produced for the allegations against them. It has impacted the lives of generations, from young infant to frail elderly.”

Today, Baha'is are still denied the right to higher education and employment in the public sector as well as benefits of the pension system. They are unjustly arrested and imprisoned. There are currently over 70 Baha'is who are in prison in Iran only because of their beliefs. Their cemeteries are destroyed, businesses and shops are attacked or closed, and the government's extensive use of the mass media as a means to denigrate systematically and vilify the Baha'is has increased in recent years.

“It isn't just about the past,” says Dr. Akhavan. “It's about the present reality of the challenges that we face in moving Iran towards a culture of human rights.”

**For photographs, got to: <http://news.bahai.org/story/1076>**

**For more information about the persecution of Baha'is, go to: <https://www.bic.org>**