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PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

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A Baha'i is killed in Iran, a victim of religious hatred

NEW YORK – In an appalling act of violence, a Baha'i has been stabbed to death by two men who admitted they attacked him because of his religious beliefs.

Farhang Amiri, 63, was murdered outside his home on 26 September 2016 in the city of Yazd, Iran, where he and his family have long resided.

On the evening of 25 September, two young men came to the residence of Mr. Amiri, asking to purchase his van. As he was not home, his son indicated that he was not aware that his father wished to sell the vehicle. The two men, however, insisted. When he asked for their contact information, they made excuses and left.

The following evening, the same two individuals returned and met with Mr. Amiri himself outside his residence. Soon after, Mr. Amiri was heard screaming. A family member, who was then joined by several other people, found him severely injured with multiple stab wounds in the chest.

At the same time, local shopkeepers caught a man who was running away from the scene and delivered him to the police. A second man was also detained by the police later. Mr. Amiri was brought by ambulance to the hospital where he died a few minutes after arrival.

While being questioned by the police in front of witnesses, the two suspects admitted to killing Mr. Amiri with a knife they brought with them for this purpose. When asked about their motive, one of the suspects answered that he carried out the murder because he knew Mr. Amiri was a Baha'i.

“Unfortunately, such a heinous act is a consequence of a longstanding, systematic effort by the Iranian authorities to encourage hatred and bigotry against Baha'is,” said Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

“Just in the city of Yazd alone, there have been multiple acts of persecution over the past few years, including dozens of wrongful arrests and imprisonments as well as scores of raids on Baha'i residences and businesses,” said Ms. Dugal.

This is not the first incident of persecution against Mr. Amiri's family. His children had their businesses and residences searched last year by government agents who confiscated laptops, telephones, and other items.

Further, in early August of this year, another Baha'i in Yazd was told, while being interrogated by government agents in Yazd, that they knew of people in the city who intended on killing Baha'is.

"The Baha'i International Community is outraged at the murder of Mr. Amiri," said Ms. Dugal. "It is deeply concerned about the ongoing and relentless persecution of the Baha'is in Iran that serves as a backdrop to such acts of violence."

She noted that there has been an increase in hate propaganda against Baha'is in the official Iranian media. In a [new report](#), the BIC says more than 20,000 such items have been disseminated over the last three years.

Ms. Dugal said that Mr. Amiri, who worked as a driver and also a farmer, lived a modest and honorable life.

"He was known among his neighbors for his kindness, gentleness, wisdom, and humility," she said. He had no quarrel with anyone. His family environment was marked by love and tenderness, and he encouraged his four children to be honest and trustworthy."

Ms. Dugal further stated that the Iranian government must ensure that the cause of justice is uninterrupted by considerations of religious affiliation.

"Open-minded Iranians, together with the international community, are now eager to see how justice will be carried out and wonder when the incitement and the prevailing atmosphere that make possible such heinous deeds will come to an end," said Ms. Dugal.

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