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*Bahá'í World Centre*

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February 27, 2002

To National Spiritual Assemblies

DEAR BAHÁ'Í FRIENDS,

With exceeding sorrow, the Universal House of Justice has asked us to announce the martyrdom by assassination of Rashid Gulov and Mosadegh Afshin Shokoufeh, two devoted believers in Tajikistan. They were killed at the hands of fanatical elements in that country who wished to cause harm to followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

On the evening of October 23 last year, Rashid Gulov, a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dushanbe, was shot and killed while returning from work.

On the morning of December 3, Mosadegh Afshin Shokoufeh was shot outside his home and died on the way to the hospital. He was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dushanbe and had previously served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Tajikistan.

The investigation by the Tajik authorities into the murders has shown that the two Bahá'ís were killed because of their Faith. You will recall the assassination only two years ago of Abdullah Mogharrabi in that same country.

Both of these friends were, with their wives and families, actively involved in raising the banner of Bahá'u'lláh in Tajikistan and rendering services to the Cause. A community so distinguished by the sacrifices of martyrs is bound to attract bountiful confirmations of its efforts from on high. May its members thus be impelled to deepen their loving unity and to reach out even further to their compatriots with the only Message that can bring them true prosperity and peace.

The House of Justice supplicates at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of the souls of Rashid Gulov and Mosadegh Afshin Shokoufeh in the worlds of God, and extends its most loving sympathy to their families and friends.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, For Department of the Secretariat

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