

THE BAHÁ'Í QUESTION
Cultural Cleansing in Iran

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Bahá'í International Community

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, the house of Mirza Abbas Nuri was a masterpiece of Islamic architecture. Mirza Abbas Nuri was a renowned 18th century Iranian calligrapher, and his home in Tehran — marked by a verdant veranda, flowered courtyard, and tasteful tile-work — was considered among the most beautiful houses of that period.

In the summer of 2004, however, Iranian authorities demolished the house. The reason was all too clear: the home was considered by Iran's Bahá'ís as a sacred and historic site, inasmuch as Mirza Abbas Nuri was the father of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

That the Iranian government would destroy part of its country's own heritage tells much about the current state of Iran's 25-year-campaign to eradicate the 300,000-member Iranian Bahá'í community. Since coming to power in 1979, Iran's cleric-led Islamic government has systematically persecuted Bahá'ís in

The demolition in June 2004 of the house of Mirza Abbas Nuri, a renowned 18th century Iranian calligrapher, reflects the Iranian government's willingness to destroy its own cultural heritage to eradicate the Bahá'í Faith from Iran.

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.....



Farhang Mavaddat was executed in June 1981, and his wife Mehri Mavaddat was imprisoned in 1980.

Iran, using execution, imprisonment, torture, and a wide range of measures designed to impoverish and drive out the country's largest religious minority.

Between 1978 and 1998, more than 200 Bahá'ís were executed by the Iranian government. Hundreds more Bahá'ís were imprisoned and tortured, and tens of thousands were deprived of jobs, pensions, businesses, and educational opportunities.

In the face of intense international pressure, most significantly through a series of United Nations human rights resolutions, the Iranian government has essentially halted the executions and greatly reduced the number of Bahá'ís held in prison.

Yet while the government has seemingly halted the most egregious forms of direct violence against individual members of the Bahá'í community, the government has nevertheless continued its campaign of persecution, albeit in a manner that clearly seeks to avoid the scrutiny of international human rights monitors.

Bahá'ís in every part of Iran continue to face the threat of short-term detention and harassment. In the spring of 2005, for example, more than 35 Bahá'ís in various areas were imprisoned without charge. While most were held less than a week, others were jailed for up to three months in a kind of "revolving door" detention apparently aimed principally at creating terror and repression. Some of the prisoners, for example, were held incommunicado, in unknown locations, while their families desperately searched for them. In addition, government agents conducted prolonged searches of many of their homes, confiscating documents, books, computers, copiers and other belongings.

Moreover, the government has sought overall to suffocate the Bahá'í community through extensive social and economic restrictions. In addition to incidents such as the razing of Mirza Abbas Nuri's home, which was preceded by the destruction of another

important Bahá'í holy site in April 2004, this effort at slow strangulation — which must be considered as nothing less than cultural cleansing — can be most clearly observed in the government's efforts to prevent Bahá'í youth from obtaining higher education.

In the early 1980s, the government banned Bahá'í youth from Iranian universities and colleges. In early 2004, however, apparently in response to international condemnation of the ban, the government publicly promised to change its policies, indicating that it would allow Bahá'í students to enroll in university in the autumn of that year. On that basis, about 1,000 Bahá'í youth took university entrance examinations.

In August 2004, the government released the results of those exams, on which Bahá'í students scored well. However, the government also falsely recorded the religious affiliation of each Bahá'í student, printing the word “Islam” in the field listing each Bahá'í student's religion. Because their religious principle prevents them from even “pretending” to deny their faith, Bahá'ís were effectively precluded from matriculating. Some 800 Bahá'ís — those who had otherwise passed their examinations — were denied the right to education for the 2004-2005 school year in this manner.

Beyond the destruction of Bahá'í holy places and the denial of education to Bahá'í youth, the government has in recent years adopted a regime of arbitrary arrests, short term imprisonment, and the confiscation of homes and properties, designed to harass and intimidate the Bahá'í community. The community as a whole remains under numerous restrictions, with its administrative institutions dismantled, its worship practices restricted, and its right to equal protection under the law utterly refused.

The government's long term strategy to destroy the Bahá'í community without bringing undue international attention was cruelly outlined in a secret 1991

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Many Bahá'ís have been tortured. The body of Dr. Nasir Vafai, a 49-year-old physician who was executed on 14 June 1981, was found to have a deep gash below his abdomen which ran all the way around his leg, severing the joint.

memorandum that aimed at establishing policy regarding “the Bahá’í question.” Drafted by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and signed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, the document calls for a series of restrictions on the access of Bahá’ís to education

and livelihood that is nothing less than a blueprint for the strangulation of the Bahá'í community. Most significantly, it lays out unequivocally the government's overall objective — to ensure that the “progress and development” of the Bahá'í community “shall be blocked.” [See page 18 for full text of document.]

The recent destruction of holy sites and denial of education to Bahá'í youth, as well as the continuing measures aimed at harassing Bahá'ís and depriving them of their rightful property and livelihood, indicate that the government's secret plan is still very much in effect. All of the evidence flatly contradicts the government's oft-repeated contention that it has no campaign of persecution against the Bahá'ís.

The fact is that the Bahá'ís of Iran remain in a precarious state. They are denied the right to practice their faith freely, guaranteed under international human rights instruments such as the International Bill of Human Rights, to which Iran is a party. The administrative institutions of their Faith have been dismantled in accordance with a government edict. They live each day knowing that their government seeks to block their development as a community, and that even slight infractions can result in the deprivation of their livelihood, imprisonment or worse.

The Bahá'í community in Iran poses no threat to the Iranian authorities. The principles of the Bahá'í Faith require its followers to avoid partisan political involvement, subversive activity, and all forms of violence. The community has painstakingly avoided aligning itself in any fashion with any of the country's governments, ideologies or opposition movements.

While defending their right to worship and practice their religion freely, as promised by international law, Bahá'ís seek only to be peaceful, law abiding and productive contributors to the advancement of Iranian society.

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The Bahá'í Faith: A global community

FOUNDED A CENTURY and a half ago in Iran, the Bahá'í Faith is today among the fastest-growing of the world's religions. With more than five million followers, who reside in virtually every nation on earth, it is the second-most widespread independent world religion, surpassing every faith but Christianity in its geographic reach. Bahá'ís reside in more than 100,000 localities around the world, an expansion that reflects their dedication to the ideal of world citizenship.

The Bahá'í Faith's global scope is mirrored in the composition of its membership. Representing a cross section of humanity, Bahá'ís come from virtually every nation, ethnic group, culture, profession, and social or economic class. More than 2,100 different ethnic and tribal groups are represented.

The Faith's Founder is Bahá'u'lláh, a Persian nobleman from Tehran who, in the mid-nineteenth century, left a life of princely comfort and security and, in the face of intense persecution and deprivation, brought to humanity a stirring new message of peace and unity.

Bahá'u'lláh claimed to be nothing less than a new and independent Messenger from God. His life, work,

People of every nationality, race, ethnic group, and religious background around the world have declared their belief in the Bahá'í Faith. Shown here is a group of people from around the world who have volunteered to serve at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel.





*Entrance to the Shrine
of Bahá'u'lláh, near
Acre, Israel.*

and influence parallel that of Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, and Muhammad. Bahá'ís view Bahá'u'lláh as the most recent in this succession of divine Messengers.

The essential message of Bahá'u'lláh is that of unity. He taught that there is only one God, that there is only one human race, and that all the world's religions represent stages in the revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. In this day, Bahá'u'lláh said, humanity has collectively come of age. As foretold in all of the world's scriptures, the time has arrived for the uniting of all peoples into a peaceful and integrated global society. "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens," He wrote.

For a global society to flourish, Bahá'u'lláh said, it must be based on certain fundamental principles. They include the elimination of all forms of prejudice; full equality between the sexes; recognition of the essential oneness of the world's great religions; the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth; universal education; the harmony of science and religion; a sustainable balance between nature and technology; and the establishment of a world federal system, based on collective security and the oneness of humanity.

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Chapter II

A CAMPAIGN OF CULTURAL CLEANSING

IN THE WORLD today, Iran seeks to portray itself as a deserving partner in international trade, inter-governmental affairs, and other cooperative activities. Understanding that its international reputation on human rights is critical, Iran has embarked on a multi-pronged effort to convince the world at large that it has largely abandoned the practices of execution, torture, imprisonments, and repression that marked the early days of the Islamic revolution. Since 2002, for example, Iran has engaged in a series of “dialogues” with the European Union and others on human rights and trade.

The story of its ongoing persecution of the Bahá’í community of Iran offers a singular litmus test of the Iranian government’s degree of sincerity in meeting

The House of the Báb in Shiraz, Iran, one of the most holy sites in the Bahá’í world, was destroyed by Revolutionary Guardsmen in 1979 and later razed by the government. The photo at top was taken before the demolition took place, shown at bottom.

globally accepted human rights standards. Bahá'ís hold no political ambitions, are committed to non-violence, and seek only to help in the redevelopment of their native land. Yet, for more than 25 years, they have been persecuted wholly for their religious beliefs.

Consider the following images:



Muna Mahmudnizhad, 17, was one of 10 Bahá'í women executed in Shiraz on 18 June 1983. The primary charge against her: teaching Bahá'í children's classes.

- After executing Bahá'ís by firing squad, Iranian officials in the 1980s would frequently demand payment for the price of the bullets from the families of the victims.
- Ten Bahá'í women, arrested and charged with the “crime” of teaching religious classes for children and youth, were hanged, one by one, from the oldest to the youngest, as the others stood by. Prisoners who watched the 1983 hangings said that the executioners had hoped to force the younger women to recant their Faith, or even simply to say they were not Bahá'ís. None did, all preferring to die rather than to renounce their beliefs.
- Bahá'ís, seeking simply to educate young people who had been excluded by government decree from higher education in Iran, set up their own college classes in private homes around the country in the late 1980s. In 1998, Iranian officials raided some 500 private homes where such classes were held, arresting 30 teachers and confiscating hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of books, furniture and educational equipment.
- Bahá'í holy sites, including those associated with the Iranian-born Founders of the Faith, have been systematically destroyed throughout the country, by officials using everything from pickaxes to bulldozers.
- When Bahá'ís in Yazd approached government officials in late 2004 to call attention to their

persecutions, they were warned that any public complaints might cause the Iranian public to rise up against them, invade and burn down their homes, assault them, and possibly even kill them. Within weeks, indeed, Bahá'í homes were invaded, Bahá'ís were beaten, the Bahá'í graveyard was desecrated, and at least one Bahá'í-owned business was set ablaze. Evidence emerged that the police chief, who in theory should have protected the Bahá'ís, ordered the attacks.

These and other images and events add up to nothing less than a systematic campaign aimed at the complete eradication of an entire minority community. It is, in short, a government-led effort at cultural cleansing.

Although the persecution of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran has its roots in Iranian history [See *"The Historical Background,"* page 65], the current campaign of systematic persecution began with the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, virtually the entire leadership of the Iranian Bahá'í community was arrested and executed or disappeared. In all, more than 200 Bahá'ís have been killed or executed since the Islamic Republic's founding, and nearly 1,000 Bahá'ís have been imprisoned.

The campaign at that time openly sought the wholesale destruction of the Bahá'í community. Thousands of Bahá'ís also were fired from jobs, deprived of pensions, and excluded from education (including primary and secondary education). Bahá'í properties, sacred sites, and cemeteries were confiscated and destroyed. All manner of rights to religious freedom, worship and assembly were abrogated.

All of this has been well documented. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and the news media have widely reported on the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran. In the 1980s and 1990s, the international

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.....

community rose up and condemned this oppression through a series of resolutions at the United Nations and in other venues.

For a time, conditions seemed to improve. In the late 1990s, the killings all but stopped. Most of those Bahá'ís held in prison were released. Bahá'í children were allowed to re-enroll in primary and secondary schools in most parts of the country. Some Bahá'ís were allowed to obtain new business licenses, and restrictions on other forms of economic activity appeared to lessen.

At the same time, however, those who followed events in Iran closely could see that the government never gave up its plans of eliminating the Bahá'í community as a viable entity in Iranian society. Indeed, continuing through today, the Bahá'í community has been kept off guard through the constant threat of arbitrary arrest and harassment. Restrictions on owning businesses and property have remained in force. And Bahá'í youth have been prevented from entering institutions of higher education.

The Bahá'í Question

Iran's anti-Bahá'í actions are not random acts, but deliberate government policy. In 1993, concrete evidence emerged that the government had in fact adopted a secret blueprint for the quiet strangulation of the Bahá'í community.

That evidence came in the form of a secret memorandum, which had been drawn up by the Iranian Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council (ISRCC) in 1991. [See page 18 for complete text of the ISRCC document.]

Stamped "confidential," the document was prepared at the request of the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the then President of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The memorandum was signed by Hujjatu'l Islam Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani, Secretary of the Council, and approved by Mr. Khamenei, who added his signature to the document.

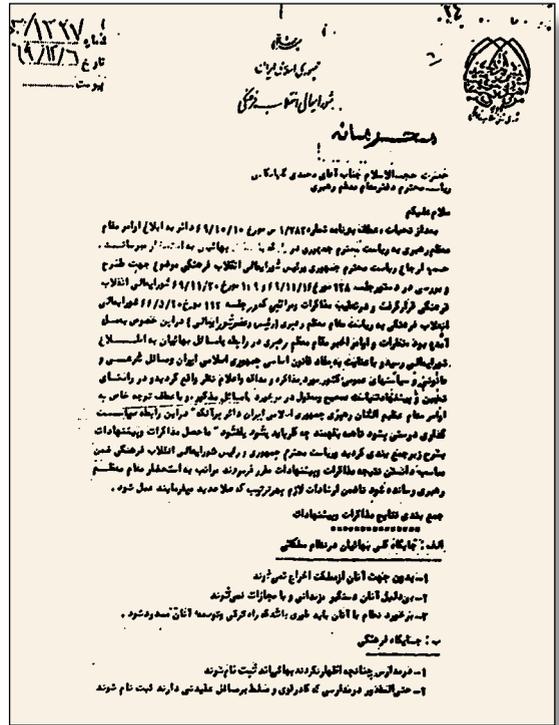
The memorandum came to light in the 1993 report by UN Special Representative Reynaldo Galindo Pohl. According to Mr. Galindo Pohl, the document came as “reliable information” just as the annual report on Iran to the UN Commission on Human Rights was being completed.

The memorandum specifically calls for Iran’s Bahá’ís to be treated in such a way “that their progress and development shall be blocked,” providing for the first time conclusive evidence that the campaign against the Bahá’ís is centrally directed by the government.

The document indicates, for example, that the government aims to keep the Bahá’ís illiterate and uneducated, living only at a subsistence level, and fearful at every moment that even the tiniest infraction will bring the threat of imprisonment or worse.

Although some of its provisions appear to grant a measure of protection to Bahá’ís, its overall impact is to create an environment where the Bahá’í community of Iran will be quietly eliminated.

The memorandum says, for example, that all Bahá’ís should be expelled from universities; that they shall be denied “positions of influence,” and instead only be allowed to “lead a modest life similar to that of the population in general”; and even that “employment



A photocopy of the 1993 memorandum from the Iranian Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council on “the Bahá’í question.”

The ISRCC document

[Translation from Persian]

[Text in square brackets added by translator]

In the Name of God!

The Islamic Republic of Iran

The Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council

Number: 1327/....

Date: 6/12/69 [25 February 1991]

Enclosure: None

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani

Head of the Office of the Esteemed Leader [Khamenei]

Greetings!

After greetings, with reference to the letter #1/783 dated 10/10/69 [31 December 1990], concerning the instructions of the Esteemed Leader which had been conveyed to the Respected President regarding the Bahá'í question, we inform you that, since the respected President and the Head of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council had referred this question to this Council for consideration and study, it was placed on the Council's agenda of session #128 on 16/11/69 [5 February 1991] and session #119 of 2/11/69 [22 January 1991]. In addition to the above, and further to the [results of the] discussions held in this regard in session #112 of 2/5/66 [24 July 1987] presided over by the Esteemed Leader (head and member of the Supreme Council), the recent views and directives given by the Esteemed Leader regarding the Bahá'í question were conveyed to the Supreme Council. In consideration of the contents of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the religious and civil laws and general policies of the country, these matters were carefully studied and decisions pronounced.

In arriving at the decisions and proposing reasonable ways to counter the above question, due consideration was given to the wishes of the Esteemed Leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran [Khamenei], namely, that "in this regard a specific policy should be devised in such a way that everyone will understand what should or should not be done." Consequently, the following proposals and recommendations resulted from these discussions.

The respected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the Head of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council, while approving these recommendations, instructed us to convey them to the Esteemed Leader [Khamenei] so that appropriate action may be taken according to his guidance.

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A. General status of the Bahá'ís within the country's system

1. They will not be expelled from the country without reason.
2. They will not be arrested, imprisoned, or penalized without reason.
3. The government's dealings with them must be in such a way that their progress and development are blocked.

B. Educational and cultural status

1. They can be enrolled in schools provided they have not identified themselves as Bahá'ís.
2. Preferably, they should be enrolled in schools which have a strong and imposing religious ideology.
3. They must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Bahá'ís.
4. Their political (espionage) activities must be dealt with according to appropriate government laws and policies, and their religious and propaganda activities should be answered by giving them religious and cultural responses, as well as propaganda.
5. Propaganda institutions (such as the Islamic Propaganda Organization) must establish an independent section to counter the propaganda and religious activities of the Bahá'ís.
6. A plan must be devised to confront and destroy their cultural roots outside the country.

C. Legal and social status

1. Permit them a modest livelihood as is available to the general population.
2. To the extent that it does not encourage them to be Bahá'ís, it is permissible to provide them the means for ordinary living in accordance with the general rights given to every Iranian citizen, such as ration booklets, passports, burial certificates, work permits, etc.
3. Deny them employment if they identify themselves as Bahá'ís.
4. Deny them any position of influence, such as in the educational sector, etc.

Wishing you divine confirmations,
Secretary of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council
Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani

[Signature]

[Note in the handwriting of Mr. Khamenei]

In the Name of God!

The decision of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council seems sufficient.

I thank you gentlemen for your attention and efforts.

[signed:] Ali Khamenei

.....
Although some of its provisions appear to grant a measure of protection to Bahá'ís, its overall impact is to create an environment where the Bahá'í community of Iran will be quietly eliminated.
.....

shall be refused to persons identifying themselves as Bahá'ís.”

The provisions regarding arrest, imprisonment and punishment can be read in two ways. The document says:

(a) With regard to the general condition of Bahá'ís, the following guidelines are hereby adopted: (i) they are not to be expelled from the country without reason; (ii) they are not to be detained, imprisoned or punished without reason; (iii) the government's treatment of them shall be such that their progress and development shall be blocked.

At first glance, it might seem that the term “without reason” is a move towards greater justice, inasmuch as virtually all of the detentions, arrests and imprisonments of Bahá'ís in the past have been without cause. However, when the entire memo is understood in the context of what to do about “the Bahá'í question,” it is clear that the directive is merely instructing officials to be sure that they justify their actions before they make any moves against a Bahá'í. It in no way promises any sort of protection.

The memorandum also belies its underlying intentions when it says that Bahá'ís will be allowed to go to school only if they do not identify themselves as Bahá'ís, and that they should be sent to schools “with a strong religious ideology.” The aim here, obviously, is to wrest Bahá'í children from their faith.

Ominously, the memorandum says that “A plan must be devised to confront and destroy their cultural roots outside the country.” That Iran would like to reach outside its borders to stamp out the Bahá'í Faith makes clear the degree of blind animosity felt by the government towards Bahá'ís.

In the years since the memorandum was written, the Bahá'í community has experienced persecution in all of the areas outlined by it: Bahá'ís have been



detained, imprisoned, and falsely charged with “spying”; they have been denied access to education and sources of livelihood; they have been stripped of all influence in Iranian society and deprived of their right to religious freedom.

Iran’s Bahá’ís have experienced persecution in every region of the country.

Indeed, as the next chapter indicates, the Iranian government has focused on social, economic and cultural repression aimed quite clearly at carrying out the plan endorsed by the “Bahá’í question” memorandum.



Chapter III

THE CURRENT SITUATION

IN CONTRAST TO its campaign of outright killing, imprisonment, and torture of Bahá'ís during the 1980s, the Iranian government has in recent years focused largely on economic and social efforts to drive Bahá'ís from Iran and destroy their cultural and community life.

Such measures include ongoing efforts to prevent Bahá'ís from receiving higher education, to deny them the means of economic livelihood, and to deprive them of the inspiration provided by their sacred and historic sites.

The government has also used arbitrary arrests and detentions, coupled with the confiscation of personal property, to terrorize, oppress and otherwise keep the community off balance — a stratagem that appears to be on the rise. Behind these techniques remains the implicit threat of long term imprisonment and execution.

Above all else, the Bahá'í community remains

Interior of the house of Mirza Abbas Nuri, an architectural landmark in Tehran, during its demolition in June 2004.

.....
The government's efforts to deny Bahá'í youth access to higher education perhaps most clearly demonstrate the lengths to which the Iranian government is willing to go in its campaign of cultural cleansing.
.....

without fundamental religious freedoms accorded to it in international human rights documents that Iran has signed. These include the right of Bahá'ís to freely assemble, to choose their leadership, and to openly manifest their religion “in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

Denial of Access to Education

The government's efforts to deny Bahá'í youth access to higher education perhaps most clearly demonstrate the lengths to which the Iranian government is willing to go in its campaign of cultural cleansing.

As previously stated, the Iranian government banned Bahá'í youth from education shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution. At first, all Bahá'í children were excluded from schooling, but in the 1990s, primary and secondary school children were allowed to re-enroll.

But the ban on the entry of Bahá'í youth into public and private institutions of higher education has remained. The Bahá'í Faith places a high value on education, and Bahá'ís have always been among the best-educated groups in Iran. Being denied access to higher education for years has had a demoralizing effect on Bahá'í youth, and the erosion of the educational level of the community is clearly aimed at hastening its impoverishment.

In late 2003, early 2004, however, the government indicated that it would allow Bahá'í youth to enroll in university in the autumn of 2004. (It's worth noting that the government was at the time engaged in a human rights dialogue with the European Union, and one demand of the Europeans was improved access to education for Bahá'ís.)

The key to this change was the publication of news articles stating that the question of religious affiliation would be removed from university entrance examina-

tions and other university enrollment documents.

The removal of the data field asking for religious affiliation was critical to Bahá'í youth who sought to enter university. The government had always said that if Bahá'ís simply declare themselves as Muslims, they would be allowed to enroll. But for Bahá'ís, such a false declaration would not only be against the principles of their faith, which precludes lying or dissimulation, it would also tacitly play into the hands of government efforts to get them to deny their faith.

False Promises

With the promise that religious affiliation would not matter, about 1,000 Bahá'ís accordingly signed up for and took university entrance examinations. And, indeed, no field declaring religion was on the papers.

Students were asked to take a religious subject examination, however. It came as part of the whole range of subject tests relating to mathematics, language, history, and so on. The religion tests were offered in four subjects, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism, corresponding to the four recognized religions in Iran.

Most Bahá'í students opted for the Islamic subject test since, as the majority religion, Islam is taught in all schools and most Bahá'ís in Iran accordingly have a solid familiarity with its teachings.

In August, however, when the examination results were mailed out, government authorities had printed the word "Islam" in a data field listing a prospective student's religion. Officials cynically explained they did that on the assumption that choosing to take the subject test on Islam amounts to a de facto declaration of faith in Islam.

Upon learning of the forced religious declaration,
(continued on page 28)

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The Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education

IN WHAT THE New York Times called “an elaborate act of communal self-preservation,” the Bahá'í community in 1987 established its own higher education program to meet the educational needs of as many of its young people as resources would allow. That program evolved over the years into a full-fledged university, known as the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE), which, until mid-1998, had an enrollment of some 900 students, a faculty of more than 150 first-rate academics and instructors, and complete course offerings in ten subject areas.

Because of the continual threat of persecution, the BIHE was forced to operate in a highly circumspect and decentralized manner. Most of its classes were held in private homes throughout Iran and what little permanent infrastructure it had was composed of a handful of rented classrooms and laboratories scattered throughout the capital.

Then, in an act that speaks volumes about the government's real attitude towards Bahá'ís, hundreds of government agents fanned out across the country in September 1998, arresting some 36 BIHE faculty and staff, raiding some 500 homes, and confiscating hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of books, equipment and records in a blatant effort to shut the university down.

“The materials confiscated were neither political nor religious, and the people arrested were not fighters or organizers,” said the New York Times, in a 29 October 1998 article about the raids. “They were lecturers in subjects like accounting and dentistry; the materials seized were textbooks and laboratory equipment.”

Teaching was done principally via correspondence, or, for specialized scientific and technical courses and in other special cases, in small-group classes that were usually held in private homes.

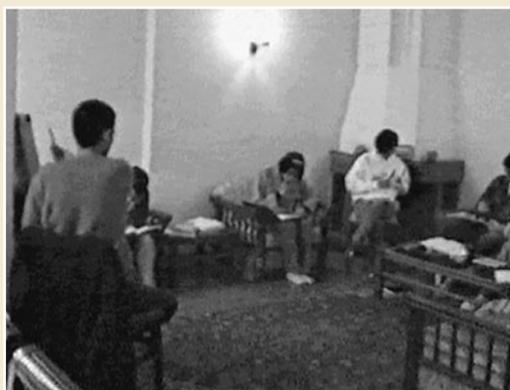
“At the beginning, the students did not even know the names of their professors,” said one BIHE professor, who, like most others quoted in this article, wanted to remain anonymous out of fear for his safety and that of his relatives in Iran. “Even after three or four years, the students did not know the names of their professors. They had never seen them. Because it was very dangerous. If somebody knows the name of them, maybe they would tell their friends. So it was all correspondence at the beginning of this plan.”

Over time, however, the Institute was able to establish a few laboratories, operated in privately owned commercial buildings in and around Tehran, for computer science, physics, dental science, pharmacology, applied chemistry and language study. The operations of these laboratories were kept prudently quiet, with students cautioned not to come and go in large groups that might give the authorities a reason to object.

Among its faculty were approximately 25 or 30 professors who had been fired from government-run universities after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Other faculty members included doctors, dentists, lawyers and engineers. The majority were educated in Iran, but a good number have degrees from universities in the West, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Columbia University, the University of California at Berkeley and the Sorbonne. None of the Bahá'í faculty members were paid for their time; all worked as volunteers.

“These youth are very precious people,” said a faculty member, explaining why they were willing to take such risks, without monetary remuneration, to establish the Institute. “We all care about them. They have been through tests and trials and they had no hope. They have been deprived of many things so if there was any chance for us to get something better for them, we did it.”

While most of those arrested were ultimately released, and the holding of classes in private homes has resumed on a small scale, the effort by the government to shut down the BIHE clearly demonstrates the degree of hatred and prejudice against the Bahá'ís that remains in certain circles of the government — and shows unambiguously why the Bahá'í community will not be safe until legal protections are firmly institutionalized, regardless of talk of reform.



Most of the classes offered by the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education have been held in private homes, like this one, which shows a professor with his back to the easel and several students on living room couches.

.....
*The Bahá'í Faith
places a high value
on education,
and Bahá'ís have
always been among
the best educated
groups in Iran.
Being denied access
to higher education
for years has had a
demoralizing effect
on Bahá'í youth,
and the erosion of
the educational level
of the community
is clearly aimed
at hastening its
impoverishment.*
.....

a group of Bahá'í students complained to officials at the Educational Measurement and Evaluation Organization (EMEO), asking if they could return the exam results with corrected information. A footnote in the letter conveying examination results said that incorrect names and addresses could and should be corrected and returned.

However, no mention was made about correcting religious information. Indeed, Bahá'ís were told by EMEO officials that “incorrect religion would not be corrected” on the forms since the Bahá'í Faith is not among the officially recognized religions in Iran.

Shortly after that meeting, Bahá'í students wrote a letter of protest to the EMEO. The students expressed, clearly, their objection to having been designated as Muslims after having been promised that they would not have to disclose their religion in order to take the entrance examination.

At first, officials of the EMEO seemed to sympathize with their problem, even allowing Bahá'ís to fill out revised registration forms with no religious affiliation. However, even though some 800 Bahá'í students who had passed their examinations also met the new deadline for submission of the revised forms, only ten names were published in an EMEO bulletin on 12 September 2004 announcing which students had been admitted to university.

It's worth noting also that many Bahá'ís received high scores on the examinations, and, in fact, many of them were passed over in the admission process, while many lower-scoring Muslim students were accepted.

In the end, out of solidarity with the rest of the 800 students who had been unfairly discriminated against, those ten Bahá'ís declined to register in the universities to which they had been accepted. And so, for the school year 2004-2005, Bahá'í young people were once again utterly deprived of access to higher education.

For Bahá'ís, the entire episode seems calculated to accomplish a number of government objectives. First, it apparently seeks to demoralize Iranian Bahá'í youth in an effort to induce them to leave the country. Second, it allowed Iranian authorities to identify by name those Bahá'ís with outstanding academic ability, who might at some point play a role in helping to revive the Bahá'í community's fortunes. And, third, it allowed the Iranian government to say to international human rights monitors that they had given the Bahá'ís a chance to enroll — and that it was the Bahá'ís themselves who refused the opportunity.

Yet the government, of course, has long been aware that Bahá'ís cannot and will not as a matter of religious principle falsify or misrepresent their beliefs. And so it is clear from the whole affair that the 1991 policy aiming at blocking the development and progress of the Bahá'í community remains in effect.

Destruction of Holy Places

In the destruction of Bahá'í holy places, the government also demonstrates the lengths to which it will go to suffocate the Bahá'í community in Iran and to cleanse Bahá'í culture from modern memory — even though it may mean destroying monuments and buildings of historic importance to the society at large.

In June 2004, authorities demolished an historic house in Tehran that had been designed and owned by the father of the Faith's founder. The house was not only significant to Bahá'ís but was also considered to be a sterling example of period architecture of historic importance to Iranians.

The house that was destroyed in June was owned by Mirza Abbas Nuri, the father of Bahá'u'lláh. Its destruction prompted an outcry by Bahá'ís around the world.

(continued on page 34)

.....

The Bahá'í community of Iran speaks for itself

IN NOVEMBER 2004, the Iranian Bahá'í community addressed a letter to Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, outlining the scope of the persecution they have faced for 25 years. The letter examines the persecution in light of those verses of the Qur'an and Islamic law that proscribe violence and uphold freedom of religion. It also notes that Iran signed and ratified the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and associated covenants that protect freedom of religion. It then recounts the government's recent duplicity in offering university enrollment to Bahá'í youth but then falsely recording them as Muslims. It ends with a call for the full emancipation of the Bahá'í community. Here follow excerpts from the letter:

15 November 2004

The Esteemed Presidency of the
Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Khatami

For more than 161 years, the Bahá'ís have been exposed, in the sacred land of Iran—the native soil of their forefathers in whose name they take pride—to a series of abuses, tortures, murders and massacres and have tolerated numerous forms of persecution, tragedy and deprivation, for no other reason than believing in God and following their Faith, the largest religious minority in Iran. Contrary to all religious, legal and moral standards, and supported by existing official documentation, they have been, individually and collectively, the subject of unwarranted discrimination and various injustices. Every time a political and social turmoil has occurred in this country, new machinations have been devised against this religious minority, and, in one way or another, their inalienable rights have been violated.

Day after day, the pressure against this wronged community became more intense and the scope of the injustice and infringement of their rights in various aspects of their lives more overt, such that their possessions, their homes, their jobs and their very existence were the target of attacks.

Bahá'ís would never commit any act contrary to the law of the land; they are well-wishers of the people and the state; they do not involve themselves with any political party; and they tenaciously uphold their Faith's principles, which call on them to love and serve the entire human race and to bring about peace, amity and unity of religion.

From the perspective of the holy religion of Islam, people are free to choose and follow their own religion, and no one has the right to impose his religion on another. The following noble verses “Let there be no compulsion in religion...” and “To you be your Way, and to me mine” confirm this point. From the perspective of the holy religion of Islam, no one has the right to attack and violate the properties, the life and the dignity of those who live under the banner of this religion, which is to be secure and protected: “...if anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people...”

The equality, the freedom and the inalienable rights of all members of the human family, without discrimination as to race, gender, language and religion, have been unequivocally specified in all international covenants, especially in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Notwithstanding the Divine Standards and social and legal norms, to which brief reference has been made, certain decisions which have baffled humanity were made at the beginning of the [Islamic] Revolution, under authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Under the rubric of Cultural Revolution, the authorities of the [Ministry of] Culture and Education decided to expel Bahá'í students, some of whom were completing their last term, from universities and other institutions of higher learning in which they were studying. Others were barred from entering these institutions solely because of their adherence to the Bahá'í Faith. Then in 1369 [1990/91], the Council of Cultural Revolution, with reference to a well-planned agenda, openly deprived Bahá'í youth from higher education, thereby denying a number of the youth of this land the opportunity to realize their potential. This situation continued for some 20 years until in Ádhar of 1382 [December of 2003]

“Peykesanjesh” (the publication of the Ministry of Science) officially announced that for the first time the religious affiliation of applicants would not be included in the application for the [university] national examination, and, instead, applicants would be asked to choose the subject of religious studies in which they would wish to be examined. Owing to the limitation cited in Article 13 of the Constitution, Bahá’í applicants necessarily chose Islamic studies for this examination.

Having received their entrance identification cards and subsequently taking this national examination, the success of Bahá’í youth, based on the government announcement of results in the first phase, was significant in that some 800 students were qualified to choose their fields of study, of whom hundreds ranked in the one to four digit range [a ranking scale extending to 200,000]. After receiving their test result forms, however, the Bahá’í applicants were surprised to see that their religion was specified as Islam. This duplicity astounded the Bahá’í community. Alas, the joyful news that the question about the religion of the applicants had been omitted from the national university entrance examination, which was a reflection of freedom of belief and a sign that the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was moving toward establishing the foundation of human rights and eliminating discrimination in education, was quite short-lived.

Questions continue to preoccupy the minds of the members of the Bahá’í community in Iran and throughout the world as well as free thinkers and advocates of human rights: Does such unfair decision-making, such resorting to strategies whose direction is obvious and whose aim is to create prejudice and to violate the indisputable rights of a community, conform to standards of justice and equity? Should those who seek progress be barred from acquiring knowledge and deprived of actualizing their God-given potentialities because of their religious belief?

By now, a quarter of a century has elapsed in the reign of the Islamic government. To every act of injustice, Bahá’ís have responded

with magnanimity. Faced with widespread and intense persecutions and multi-faceted iniquities, the Bahá'ís have never deviated, even by a hair's breadth, from the straight divine path, and they continue to hold fast onto the cord of patience and tolerance as dictated by their Faith and belief.

They fain would expect that, over such a long period of time, which should have been sufficient to remove suspicions and misunderstandings, the esteemed authorities would have realized that the Bahá'ís firmly believe in the oneness of God and the divine nature of all religions and prophets, as well as the realm beyond as confirmed in all the divine scriptures; they obey the laws and regulations of their country in accordance with the principles of their religion; they strive to preserve the interests of their homeland by offering cultural, social, economic and developmental assistance; and they would never refuse any service to establish human virtues and perfections which fulfil such universal visions as world peace and the oneness of humanity.

It is now hoped that [that respected authority], based on the Constitution, will take immediate action to ensure the emancipation of the Iranian Bahá'í community, reinstating their human rights and restoring the privileges of which they have been deprived.

Respectfully,

The Iranian Bahá'í community

In six nations, Bahá'í communities coordinated the publication of a statement in major newspapers that decried the house's destruction as part of a campaign of "cultural cleansing" against the minority Bahá'í community in Iran.

Noting that the house was an "historical monument, a precious example of Islamic-Iranian architecture, 'a matchless model of art, spirituality, and architecture,'" the statement compared this action by Iran's extremist Muslim leadership to those of the Taliban of Afghanistan.

"The hatred of the extremist mullahs for the Bahá'ís is such that they, like the Taliban of Afghanistan who destroyed the towering Buddhist sculptures at Bamian, intend not only to eradicate the religion, but even to erase all traces of its existence in the country of its birth," said the statement.

"In their determination to rid Iran of the Bahá'í community and obliterate its very memory, the fundamentalists in power are prepared even to destroy the cultural heritage of their own country, which they appear not to realize they hold in trust for humankind,"

the statement continued.

Mirza Abbas Nuri himself was widely regarded as one of Iran's greatest calligraphers and statesmen. In July, the Iranian newspaper *Hamshahri* published a lengthy article about his life and the architecture of his house.

"As he had good taste for the arts and for beauty, he designed his own house in such a style that it became known as one of the most beautiful houses of that



Destruction of cultural heritage. Another image of the interior of the house of Mirza Abbas Nuri in Tehran during its demolition in June 2004.

period,” wrote Iman Mihdizadih on 13 July 2004. “The plasterwork and the tile-work in the rooms as well as the verdant veranda, the courtyard with its central pool, and the trees planted in the flowerbeds, all created a tranquil atmosphere in this house.”

The house was destroyed over the period of about one week in June. The demolition order was issued in April by Ayatollah Kani, director of the Marvi School and the Endowments Office of the government, ostensibly for the purpose of creating an Islamic cemetery. When the demolition started on 20 June, officials from the Ministry of Information were present, and by 29 June more than 70 percent of the structure had been destroyed.

The destruction of the house of Mirza Abbas Nuri followed the razing in April 2004 of another historic Bahá’í property, the gravesite of Quddus, an early disciple of the Bahá’í Faith. The action came after demolition work started in February and then halted temporarily in the face of protest at the local, national, and international levels.

Indeed, Bahá’ís had approached national authorities after the demolition work had been started, and for a time that work was halted. Then, in April, it was discovered that the dismantling of the gravesite had continued surreptitiously over a period of days until the structure was entirely demolished.

The house-like structure marked the resting place of Mullah Muhammad-Ali Barfurushi, known as Quddus (The Most Holy). Quddus was the foremost disciple of the Báb, the Prophet-Herald of the Bahá’í Faith.

The destruction of two such important holy sites in 2004 was not without precedent. In March 1979, the House of the Báb, the holiest Bahá’í shrine in Iran, was turned over by the government to a Muslim cleric known for his anti-Bahá’í activities. In September that year, that house was destroyed by a mob led by mullahs

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.....

and officials of the Department of Religious Affairs.

Likewise, in the early years of the Islamic Republic, the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Takur, where the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith spent His childhood, met a similar fate: it was demolished and the site was offered for sale to the public.

Over the years, as well, in Tehran and other cities throughout Iran, Bahá'í buildings have been looted and burned, Bahá'í cemeteries have been bulldozed and Bahá'í graves have been broken open. In the Tehran area, the Bahá'ís were forced to bury their dead in a barren stretch of land reserved by the authorities for “infidels.” Having access to their own cemeteries is especially important to Bahá'ís because, as might be expected, they are not allowed to bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries.

Arbitrary Arrests and Harassment

Beyond such specific efforts at cultural cleansing, the government has in recent years continued its policy of keeping the Bahá'í community off balance through various measures, including arbitrary arrests, short term detention, persistent harassment, and other forms of intimidation and discrimination.

As noted, hundreds of Bahá'ís were imprisoned during the early 1980s. Then, in response to international pressure, the government gradually released nearly all long-term Bahá'í prisoners. As of July 2005, for example, only two Bahá'ís, Dhabihu'llah Mahrami and Mehran Kawsari, were being held under long-term prison sentences.

Yet the use of arbitrary arrest and short-term imprisonment as methods of harassment, terror and oppression against Bahá'ís not only continues but appears to be on the rise. In late July-early August 2005, as this publication was going to press, some 16 Bahá'ís in three



Gravesite of Quddus, an historic figure of the Bahá'í Faith, during its surreptitious demolition in April 2004. The gravesite is located in Babol, Iran.



Bahá'ís gather outside Tehran in 1982 for the funeral of one of their co-religionists who was killed by the government.

locations were arrested and imprisoned.

In March, April, and May of 2005 some 35 Bahá'ís across Iran were arrested and held for short periods, ranging from a week to nearly three months. Those arrested included not only prominent members of the community in Tehran, but also six Bahá'ís in Shiraz, nine in the city of Semnan, and nine Bahá'í farmers whose homes and land had previously been confiscated in the village of Kata.

Most were arbitrarily detained without any charge being filed against them. Some of the prisoners were

held incommunicado, in unknown locations, while their families desperately searched for them. Most were released only after having posted significant amounts of money, property deeds or business licenses as bail.

Moreover, government agents conducted prolonged searches of many of the homes of those who were arrested, confiscating documents, books, computers, copiers and other belongings.

Among those arrested in the spring of 2005, only Mr. Kawsari remains in prison at the time this booklet was published in August 2005. Mr. Kawsari was arrested on 8 March 2005 for distributing the open letter sent to President Khatami [see page 30]. He received a one-year sentence and has been incarcerated in Evin prison.

Also recently in the city of Yazd, long a center of anti-Bahá'í activities, it appears that the police chief orchestrated a series of incidents against Bahá'ís. In late 2004 and early 2005, a number of Bahá'ís were arrested, detained, and interrogated; several were beaten in their homes; at least one Bahá'í-owned business was set afire; and the Bahá'í graveyard was desecrated.

Such incidents are hardly isolated. In 2003, for example, some 23 Bahá'ís in 18 different localities in Iran were subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention for short periods of time. In all cases, Iranian authorities summoned these people because they were Bahá'ís, questioned them about their beliefs, and then released them.

In 2002, 17 Bahá'í youth who were participating in a camp were arrested and detained for questioning. Reports about this incident in the Iranian press carried a negative slant, referring to the young Bahá'ís in a derogatory and vulgar manner.

Discrimination in the courts

The story of Mr. Mahrami, also in prison at the time of the publication of this booklet, is instructive in that

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it likewise reflects the very real and continuing threat of imprisonment for the Bahá'ís in Iran — and the degree to which the legal system is prejudiced against Bahá'ís. Mr. Mahrami was first called before the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Yazd in 1995 and questioned about his adherence to the Bahá'í Faith. Several meetings were held in an effort to persuade him to renounce his beliefs; he refused and was charged with apostasy. In 1996 he was sentenced to death. Since his heirs are not Muslims but Bahá'ís, his properties and assets were confiscated. After his lawyer had appealed to the Supreme Court, Iranian officials announced that the Court had rejected the verdict of the Revolutionary Court and referred the case to a civil court. However, in 1997, the Supreme Court confirmed the death sentence (communicated orally to his relatives). Finally, in 1999, the Bahá'í International Community was unofficially informed that a Presidential amnesty had commuted Mr. Mahrami's death sentence to life imprisonment.

The government has also used the courts to reinforce a general sense of second-class citizenship for Bahá'ís. Over the years, there have been numerous discriminatory decisions rendered against Bahá'ís.

In a recent court case, for example, 12 plaintiffs filed a petition against a man accused of murdering their relative, who was a Bahá'í. The court's verdict recognized the crime as a "quasi-intentional" murder and convicted the man as charged. But he was sentenced, without payment of blood money, to only four months imprisonment, and that was suspended as time already served. Calling Bahá'ís a "perverse sect" and "infidels," the court concluded that they should receive neither requital nor blood money in cases of murder. This verdict is alarming, as it could incite Muslims to believe that they are free to take the lives of Bahá'ís in Iran with impunity.

Economic Measures

In the 1980s, over 10,000 Bahá'ís were dismissed from positions in government and educational institutions. Many remain unemployed and receive no unemployment benefits. The pensions of Bahá'ís dismissed on religious grounds were terminated, and some were even required to return salaries paid to them before they were dismissed.

Efforts to impoverish the Bahá'í community and to deprive its members of their economic livelihood have continued through a variety of means. In particular, government authorities have in many places around the country continued to block Bahá'ís from receiving pensions, conducting business, or finding employment. Authorities have also continued in the arbitrary confiscation of homes and properties owned by Bahá'ís.

Employment

Limitations on employment opportunities continue to be imposed on Bahá'ís in various sectors of the economy. Even when Bahá'ís find employment in the private sector, government officials often intervene and force the owners of the companies to fire them. And when Bahá'ís start a private business, the authorities attempt to block their activities.

Two recent court cases, for example, demonstrate the efforts of the authorities to impede Bahá'ís from conducting private business activities.

In September 2003, Branch 13 of the Tribunal of Administrative Justice rejected an appeal by a Bahá'í businessman against an injunction that required him to cease his business operations. The court also rejected his petition to obtain a business license. The tribunal held that his appeal was “disqualified as irrelevant, as [it was] outside the scope of the applicable regulations,”

.....
In the 1980s, over 10,000 Bahá'ís were dismissed from positions in government and educational institutions. Many remain unemployed and receive no unemployment benefits. The pensions of Bahá'ís dismissed on religious grounds were terminated, and some were even required to return salaries paid to them before they were dismissed.
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.....
The government continues to deny many Bahá'ís rightfully earned pension funds. Documents prove that this policy is intentional — and solely related to the pensioner's membership in the Bahá'í Faith.
.....

citing the information the court had “about the plaintiff’s being associated with the perverse Baha’i sect.”

In 2003, in a second, similar case, an administrative injunction was issued to impede a Bahá’í-owned company in Isfahan from doing business. The company is owned and directed by a Bahá’í engineer and employs some 120 staff — most of whom are Bahá’ís — manufacturing electrical and communication cables. In the injunction, the Director-General of the Central Office of Protection, which is under the Iranian Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephone, informed the company of an official memorandum issued in April 2003. The document concluded that “the link between the... company... and the perverse Baha’i sect is established to be true; therefore it is advisable to adopt measures to prevent any collaboration with the above-mentioned company.”

The intergovernmental body most concerned with the right to employment, the International Labour Organization (ILO), made a number of references to the ongoing discrimination against the Bahá’ís in Iran at its annual Conference on Conventions and Recommendations in June 2003. The “situation of members of the Bahá’í Faith, an unrecognized religious minority, continues to be a source of concern,” said the report. “The barriers that these people face in access to higher education and to employment in public institutions are still high.”

Deprivation of Pensions

In the first years of its campaign of persecution, the Iranian government stopped pension payments to thousands of Bahá’ís who had been employed in government service. Bahá’ís have, over the years, sought to have their pensions restored. The government, however, continues to deny many Bahá’ís rightfully earned

pension funds. Documents prove that this policy is intentional — and solely related to the pensioner’s membership in the Bahá’í Faith.

In a letter dated 30 May 2003, for example, the Office of Beneficiary Affairs of the Keshavarzi Bank instructed its General Office to discontinue the disbursement of a Bahá’í’s pension to his heirs because he was a member of the Bahá’í “sect.” The decision was later confirmed by the head of the Office of Legal and Parliament Affairs, who cited a judicial decree of Imam Khomeini and said a letter of the National Retirement Bureau number 6/18448 (dated 3 November 2003) must be implemented in such cases.

Likewise, in a letter dated 17 December 2003, the General Office of Finance transmitted a letter to the director of the Retirement Bureau of the Province of Azerbaijan-e-Sharqi, stating that since a Bahá’í’s employment had been terminated due to his belief in “the perverse Baha’i sect,” there was no authorization to return or transfer his retirement deductions.

Earlier documented evidence involved decisions in four more cases, dating from July 2001 to November 2002, where Iranian Bahá’ís have been denied access to their own, rightfully earned pensions. The documents prove that this action was taken solely on the basis of religious belief, as they explicitly state: “payment of pension to those individuals connected with the Baha’i sect is illegal.”

The Confiscation of Property

During the past few years, there has been an increase in confiscation of Bahá’í properties, in particular in the cities of Rafsanjan, Kerman, Marv-Dasht, and Yazd. Property owned by Bahá’ís has also been confiscated in Tehran, in the village of Kata and in the village of Matneq. In October 2004, for example, the homes of

.....

In virtually every case, court judgments or documents have emerged that prove the properties were confiscated because the owners were Bahá’ís.

.....

six Bahá'í families in Kata (in the Buyir-Ahmad region of Iran) were confiscated on the order of the prosecutor of the city of Shiraz, with the assistance of the local police.

In virtually every case, court judgments or documents have emerged that prove the properties were confiscated because the owners were Bahá'ís.

For example, one house confiscated in Tehran in 1998 belonged to a Muslim landlord, who was leasing the property to a Bahá'í. The landlord lodged an appeal, and an extract from the court documents (dated 15 Sep-

The ongoing threat of execution

SINCE 1978, MORE than 200 Bahá'ís have been killed or executed in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Most were killed in the early 1980s, before international attention was focused on the crisis. A full list of those killed or executed can be found in Appendix I.

Although in recent years the government has sharply reduced its killing rate, it continued occasionally to execute Bahá'ís through the late 1990s. The most recent execution of a Bahá'í in Iran was in July 1998, when Ruhullah Rawhani was hanged in Mashhad.

Nevertheless, the threat of execution or killing still looms large for Iranian Bahá'ís, who remain without recognized legal status in Iran.

A number of Bahá'ís in recent years have been held in prison under the sentence of death, for example. Fortunately, international pressure has helped to convince Iranian authorities to commute or reduce those sentences.

One such case surrounded the sentence given to Musa Talibi, a Bahá'í from Vilashahr, who was arrested in 1994 and then sentenced to death in 1996 on the charge of apostasy. He was 63 years old at the time.

After appeal and initial confirmation of this sentence by the Supreme Court, the Bahá'í International Community was unofficially

tember 2001) reveals the underlying judicial issues:

“In principle, the foundation for the Ministry of Intelligence taking legal and serious action against the cultural activities of the misguided sect of Baha’ism has been on the order of His Excellency the Supreme Leader.... The action taken by Court 49 regarding the seizure and confiscation of the properties belonging to the misguided sect of Baha’ism is legally and religiously justifiable.... Such opposition [however] must be carried out in a manner and within a framework through which the rights of the righteous [literally, ‘those to

informed in 1999 that his death sentence had been commuted to life imprisonment. Finally, in May 2003, after being visited by members of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention that February, Mr. Talibi was freed.

Likewise, two men, Bihnam Mithaqi and Kayvan Khalajabadi were released in February 2004, after having been imprisoned since 1989 on charges arising solely from membership in the Bahá’í Faith. They had been sentenced to death in 1991, and their sentences reconfirmed on appeal by the Supreme Court in 1996. In 2001, however, the chief of the judicial branch reduced their sentences to 15 years in prison for “association with Bahá’í institutions.” Both men were released on 7 February 2004, having served out their full sentences.

The stories behind the two most recent executions — in 1998 and 1992 — reflect the arbitrary and terrifying nature of the threat.

Ruhu’llah Rawhani, a father of four and an active Bahá’í during his entire life, suffered through the indignities of religious persecution



Ruhu’llah Rawhani, who was hanged in Mashad by government authorities on 21 July 1998.

whom rights are due'] would be safeguarded and protected.”

In yet another recent case, a Bahá'í appealed for the return of his home, confiscated because of its alleged use as a venue for teaching about the Bahá'í Faith, and for holding classes of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education. In rejecting the appeal, the Islamic Revolutionary Court upheld the decision of a lower court on the grounds that the owner had held Bahá'í classes in this home and that over 900 volumes of Bahá'í books

throughout much of Iran's recent history. In 1984, Mr. Rawhani was arrested and imprisoned for more than a year, during which he was tortured, according to relatives. He was subsequently released but then was arrested a second time in the mid-1990s. The charge was apparently related to his volunteer work at purely religious activities, such as prayer meetings and children's classes. He was released after 24 hours.

In September 1997, however, the medical supplies salesman was arrested for a third time, and placed in solitary confinement in Mashhad. Mr. Rawhani had been accused of “converting” a woman from Islam to the Bahá'í Faith. The woman, however, denied that she had converted; she explained that her mother was a Bahá'í and that she herself had been raised as a Bahá'í. She was not arrested.

Mr. Rawhani was kept incommunicado for the duration of his imprisonment and no information is available regarding his treatment in prison. There is no evidence that he was accorded any legal process, and no sentence was announced. It appears certain that he was not allowed access to a lawyer.

On 20 July 1998, someone from the Iranian Intelligence Department telephoned a Bahá'í in Mashhad stating that Mr. Rawhani was to be executed the next day. Initially, this statement was not believed, as Bahá'ís in Iran have received similar calls previously in apparent attempts to frighten them.

The next morning, the family was called, told to come to the prison

had been found there. A further attempt to obtain redress was also denied, as Branch 23 of the Appeals Court in Tehran declared the verdict final and ended all legal recourse in this case.

Such verdicts demonstrate that the Iranian authorities continue to consider the Bahá'í Faith as an illegal movement and legitimize, through the courts, violations against the rights of Iranian citizens who are members of the Bahá'í community.

to collect Mr. Rawhani's body, and given an hour to bury him. Rope marks on his neck indicated he had been hanged.

Bahman Samandari, a Tehran businessman, was executed in March 1992. Mr. Samandari, who ran a well-known Tehran travel agency, was summoned without explanation to Evin prison by authorities on 17 March 1992. The next day, he was secretly executed.

No official charge or verdict was announced, and inquiries by family members produced vague indications that Mr. Samandari's execution was related to his previous detention more than four years before, when he and four other Bahá'ís were arrested for having a prayer meeting in his home.

In addition to these government-sponsored executions, Bahá'ís have also recently been killed under circumstances that indicate continuing disregard for Bahá'ís as individuals who deserve protection under the law.



*Mr. Bahman Samandari,
who was summarily executed
by the Government in
March 1992.*



Chapter IV

“TO KILL A BAHÁ’Í IS A GOOD DEED...”

How the contemporary persecutions started

LONG BEFORE THE targeting of innocents by suicide bombers and the gruesome web-cast of “infidel” executions on the Internet became commonplace, the Bahá’í community of Iran faced and survived a horrific campaign of killing, torture and imprisonment that had been inspired by religious fanaticism.

In 1982, in the village of Rahimkhani, armed assailants broke into the home of Askar Muhammadi and shot him in the back. Confronted by Mr. Muhammadi’s brother as they were leaving the scene of the crime, the murderers stated simply: “He was a Bahá’í, and to kill a Bahá’í is a good deed for devout Muslims.”

While many Iranians hailed the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 as the dawn of a long awaited era of political liberty and national reconstruction, it was clear from the start that the Bahá’ís would be unjustly reviled for their beliefs.

Funeral of Hashin Farnush, arrested 5 November 1980, executed 23 June 1981. His wife is shown kneeling down at his graveside in Tebran.

.....
*“He was a Bahá’í,
and to kill a Bahá’í
is a good deed for
devout Muslims.”*
.....



.....
Courts in the Islamic Republic have denied Bahá'ís the right of redress or protection against assault, killings or other forms of persecution — and have ruled that Iranian citizens who kill or injure Bahá'ís are not liable for damages because their victims are “unprotected infidels.”
.....

Even before Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile to assume power in February of that year, an increase in attacks on Bahá'ís presaged the wholesale persecution that was to come. In 1978 at least seven Bahá'ís were killed, most as a result of mob violence.

When the Republic's new constitution was drawn up in April 1979, certain rights of the Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian minorities in Iran were specifically mentioned and protected. However, no mention whatsoever was made of the rights of the Bahá'í community, Iran's largest religious minority.

Under Iran's concept of an Islamic government, this exclusion has come to mean that Bahá'ís enjoy no rights of any sort, and that they can be attacked and persecuted with impunity. Courts in the Republic have denied Bahá'ís the right of redress or protection against assault, killings or other forms of persecution — and have ruled that Iranian citizens who kill or injure Bahá'ís are not liable for damages because their victims are “unprotected infidels.”

Without any claim to civil rights, the Bahá'í community saw rapid deterioration of its position within Iranian society. In March 1979, the House of the Báb, the holiest Bahá'í shrine in Iran, was turned over by the government to a Muslim cleric known for his anti-Bahá'í activities. In September, the house was destroyed by a mob led by mullahs and officials of the Department of Religious Affairs.

A November 1979 edict from the Ministry of Education required not only the dismissal of all Bahá'í teachers, but also held them responsible for the repayment of all salaries they had previously received.



The nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly who were kidnapped in 1980.

At least seven Bahá'ís were killed in 1979. Two were executed by the government and one was hanged in prison. Others were beaten to death or killed in local incidents.

“To cut off the head..”

Buoyed by their growing influence over all aspects of Iranian life, in 1980 the clergy moved “to cut off the head” of the “heretical” Bahá'í movement by destroying its leadership, believing that the majority of the Bahá'ís would then succumb to social pressures to recant their Faith.

This policy is reflected in the fact that nearly half the Bahá'ís executed in Iran since 1979 have been members of national and local governing councils of the Bahá'í community, known as Spiritual Assemblies.

The execution on 27 June 1980 of Yusuf Sobhani, a highly regarded member of the Tehran Bahá'í community, was among the first of such killings that targeted Bahá'í leadership. This was followed by the executions of the chairman and another member of the local Spiritual Assembly of Tabriz on 14 July 1980, a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Rasht on 16 July 1980, and two prominent Bahá'í spokesmen in Tehran on 30 July and 15 August 1980.

On 21 August 1980, all nine members of the national Bahá'í governing council, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran, were abducted and disappeared without a trace. It seems certain that they were executed.

During 1980 at least 24 Bahá'ís were killed in Iran;

.....
*“The Qur’an
recognized only
the People of the
Book as religious
communities. Others
are pagans. Pagans
must be eliminated.”*

— Iranian Attorney
General Siyyid
Moussavi-Tabrizi
.....

20 were executed by the government and the rest were stoned, assassinated or burned to death.

Despite a growing international outcry, the rate of executions continued to grow through 1981. By late summer that year, revolutionary courts were openly sentencing Bahá’ís to death purely on religious grounds and announcing the fact in Iranian media. The Attorney General, Siyyid Moussavi-Tabrizi, stated explicitly: “The Qur’an recognized only the People of the Book as religious communities. Others are pagans. Pagans must be eliminated.” Under Islamic law in Iran, “People of the Book” include only Muslims, Jews, Christians and, by special dispensation, Zoroastrians.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Iran was reconstituted through new elections but was again ravaged by the execution of eight of its members on 27 December 1981. In all at least 48 Bahá’ís were killed in Iran during 1981; of those, all but two were executed by the government.

Executions continued apace through 1982, 1983 and 1984. At least 32 Bahá’ís were executed or killed in 1982, 29 were executed or killed in 1983, and 30 were executed or killed in 1984. And, again, the targets of

*Faramarz Samandari,
with his wife Anita,
and children. He was a
physician and professor at
the University of Tabriz.
He was executed in Tabriz
on 13 July 1980.*



these executions were often members of Bahá'í governing councils. Four members of the National Spiritual Assembly, which had once again been courageously re-established through fresh elections, were executed in 1984, although by then the institution had been disbanded in accordance with a government decree and the individuals held no official position in the Bahá'í community. [See Appendix I for a complete list of those who have been killed or executed.]

One of the most dramatic groups of executions came in June 1983, when ten Iranian Bahá'í women, including two teen-age girls, were hanged. The primary charge against them: teaching Bahá'í children's classes. [See page 54.]

The women were subjected to intense physical and mental abuse in an effort to coerce them to recant their Faith — an option that was almost always pressed upon Bahá'í prisoners. Yet, like most Bahá'ís who have been arrested in Iran, they refused to deny their beliefs. Nevertheless, the fact that so many Bahá'ís were given the option of recanting, with the promise of release if they did so, is among the strongest proofs that the persecutions were based solely on religious beliefs.

Imprisonment and Torture

Since 1979, nearly 1,000 Bahá'ís have been arrested and imprisoned. At one point in 1986, some 747 Bahá'ís were being held in prisons throughout Iran. In most cases, they had no trials.

The torture of Bahá'ís in Iranian prisons — and particularly of those who had been members of Bahá'í governing councils — was routine and systematic. Again, according to Bahá'ís who survived, the purpose of the torture almost invariably was to make the Bahá'ís recant their Faith or confess to some treasonous activity.

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Hanged for teaching “Sunday school”

FEW INCIDENTS ARE more shocking — or revealing of the religious basis of the persecution against Bahá’ís and the courage with which they faced it — than the group hanging of ten Bahá’í women in Shiraz on 18 June 1983.

Their crime: teaching religious classes to Bahá’í youth — the equivalent of being “Sunday school” teachers in the West.

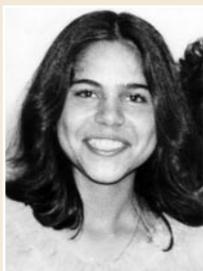
Ranging in age from 17 to 57, the ten Bahá’í women were led to the gallows in succession. Authorities apparently hoped that as each saw the others slowly strangle to death, they would renounce their own faith.

But according to eyewitness reports, the women went to their fate singing and chanting, as though they were enjoying a pleasant outing.

One of the men attending the gallows confided to a Bahá’í: “We tried saving their lives up to the last moment, but one by one, first the older ladies, then the young girls, were hanged while the others were forced to watch, it being hoped that this might induce them to recant their belief. We even urged them to say they were not Bahá’ís, but not one of them agreed; they preferred the execution.”

All of the women had been interrogated and tortured in the months leading up to their execution. Indeed, some had wounds still visible on their bodies as they lay in the morgue after their execution.

The youngest of these martyrs was Muna Mahmudnizhad, a 17-year-old schoolgirl who because of her youth and conspicuous



*Muna
Mahmudnizhad*



*Mahsbid
Nirumand*



Simin Sabiri



*Zarrin Muqimi-
Abyánih*



Akhtar Thabit

innocence became, in a sense, a symbol of the group. In prison, she was lashed on the soles of her feet with a cable and forced to walk on bleeding feet.

Yet she never waived in her faith, even to the point of kissing the hands of her executioner, and then the rope, before putting it around her own throat.

Another young woman, Zarrin Muqimi-Abyanih, 28, told the interrogators whose chief goal was to have her disavow her faith: “Whether you accept it or not, I am a Bahá’í. You cannot take it away from me. I am a Bahá’í with my whole being and my whole heart.”

During the trial of another of the women, Ruya Ishraqi, a 23-year-old veterinary student, the judge said: “You put yourselves through this agony only for one word: just say you are not a Bahá’í and I’ll see that...you are released...” Ms. Ishraqi responded: “I will not exchange my faith for the whole world.”

The names of the other women hanged on 18 June 1983 were: Shahin Dalvand, 25, a sociologist; Izzat Janami Ishraqi, 57, a homemaker; Mahshid Nirumand, 28, who had qualified for a degree in physics but had it denied her because she was a Bahá’í; Simin Sabiri, 25; Tahirih Arjumandi Siyavushi, 30, a nurse; Akhtar Thabit, 25, also a nurse; Nusrat Ghufrani Yalda’i, 47, a mother and member of the local Bahá’í Spiritual Assembly.

All had seen it as their duty to teach Bahá’í religious classes — especially since the government had barred Bahá’í children from attending even regular school.



*Shabin (Shirin)
Dalvand*



Ruya Ishraqi



*Izzat Ishraqi
(Janami)*



Tahirih Siyavushi



Nusrat Yalda’i

.....
*Bahá'ís were
also subjected
to psychological
torture, including
mock executions
and being forced to
witness the torture
of family members
and friends.*
.....

Torture included sustained beating and flogging, the bastinado (whipping the soles of the feet), the pulling out of fingernails and teeth, and the deprivation of food and water for days at a time.

Bahá'ís were also subjected to psychological torture, including mock executions and being forced to witness the torture of family members and friends.

Thus an elderly Bahá'í woman, who was a member of a local Bahá'í council, was tortured in front of a dozen other Bahá'ís in an effort to persuade her and them to deny their Faith. The woman's jailer took her by her hair and continually banged her head against the wall. She was beaten about the head for a long time, until her body was covered with blood. After two years of imprisonment, she was summarily released, with no recourse against the abuse she had received.

At least 13 Bahá'ís who died in prison are believed to have been tortured to death. In these cases, the bodies were buried by the authorities before the families could view them.

Two of the most recent cases involving torture and intimidation took place in July 1997.

Masha'llah Enayati, a 63-year-old Bahá'í resident of Tehran, died on 4 July 1997, after being severely beaten while in custody. During a visit to his native village of Ardistan to attend a Bahá'í meeting, Mr. Enayati was arrested under circumstances which are not clear. He was taken to prison in Isfahan, where he was severely beaten on all parts of the body. It appears that he was held in prison for about a week before being taken to a hospital, where he eventually died. Mr. Enayati's death certificate is worded in a most unusual way, suggesting that the doctor himself may have been under threat. Under "cause of death" the doctor entered in his own handwriting, "will be known later."

Shahram Reza'i, a young Bahá'í serving as a conscript in the Iranian army on a military base near the



A woman from Kata, murdered by a mob in 1979, shown with her two younger sisters.

city of Rasht, was shot in the head by his superior officer on 6 July 1997 and died the following day. The officer concerned, who was responsible for weapons training, maintained that the bullets were fired in error. He was released after a few days, once it was determined that the dead soldier was a Bahá'í. The court excused the officer from paying the blood money normally required in such instances, ordering him to pay just the cost of the three bullets used to kill Mr. Reza'i. Mr. Reza'i was the seventh Bahá'í in Iran engaged in compulsory military service to have been slain by officers or other soldiers.

Social and Economic Intimidation

As noted earlier, the authorities have also conducted a campaign of economic, social and cultural intimidation against the Bahá'í community of Iran. The objective, it is clear, has been to deprive Bahá'ís of their rights to education, to jobs and to homes of their own — once again with the intention of forcing them to recant.

Since the 1930s, the Bahá'ís in Iran have been forbidden to run their own educational establishments, and have therefore educated their children at state-run schools and universities where they have often suffered discrimination and persecution.

The level of discrimination and persecution in schools rose sharply following the Islamic revolution in 1979. In 1981, an official decree was issued barring Bahá'í students and professors from admission to or employment at any university in Iran. Universities published new prospectuses in 1981 requiring that applicants belong to one of the four religions recognized in the constitution, namely the Muslim, Jewish, Christian or Zoroastrian religions.

Admission to primary and secondary schools was refused to those who identified themselves as Bahá'ís, and hundreds of students were expelled.

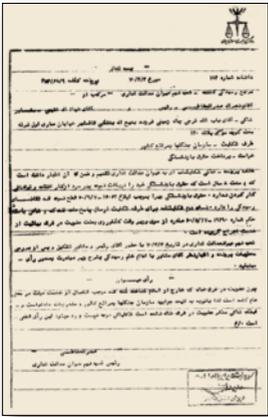
Deprivation of Employment

The Iranian government has also sought to intimidate and stifle Bahá'ís by making it impossible for them to earn a living.

In 1979 the government started dismissing all Bahá'í civil servants without compensation. By July 1982, all Bahá'í public servants had been dismissed and the pensions of all retired Bahá'í civil servants had been terminated.

In late 1984, the Attorney General started issuing summonses demanding that all those Bahá'í civil servants who had been dismissed repay salaries they had received during their employment. They were threatened with imprisonment if they did not comply. Obviously, repayment of a lifetime's wages was beyond the means of most victims. Many were imprisoned as a result of failure to meet this absurd demand.

The government has also systematically sought to



Government document of permanent dismissal from employment for being a Bahá'í.

drive Bahá'ís in the private sector to economic ruin. In the early 1980s, the trading licenses of most Bahá'í businessmen were revoked, the assets of businesses run by Bahá'ís were confiscated, and bank accounts of most Bahá'í businessmen were frozen. In addition, the authorities intimidated private employers into dismissing many Bahá'í employees.

Almost every dismissal notice served on a Bahá'í employee, whether in the public or the private sector, stated that the reason for dismissal was membership in the Bahá'í Faith and that the individual's job would be restored if he or she would recant his or her faith.

In addition to depriving Bahá'ís of a livelihood, the government in the early 1980s sought to deprive arrested Bahá'ís of many of their possessions, including their homes.

Through its takeover of the major Bahá'í savings company, Nawnahalan — literally meaning “new plant,” a reference to the fact that the savings institution was started by Bahá'í children at the turn of the century — the government in one move swept away the life savings of 15,000 Bahá'í shareholders and investors. In addition, thousands of Bahá'ís, rich and poor alike, have had their homes and personal possessions confiscated by the government, and thousands more have had their homes destroyed by arson and looting. In rural areas, the authorities have encouraged the plunder and destruction of the livestock and crops of Bahá'í farmers.

Confiscation of Community Assets

The Bahá'í community in Iran has never been allowed to hold community property in its own name. As a result, all community property has been held in the name of a non-profit company created for this purpose. This body, the Umana — meaning “Trustee” — Company, was

.....
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.....

How Iran has justified the persecution

INEVITABLY, IRAN'S RESPONSES to the world outcry on behalf of the Bahá'ís have proven entirely unsatisfactory. The reaction has ranged from simple silence to attempts to justify the persecutions by charging the Bahá'ís with a wide variety of offenses.

An examination of the charges that have been made against the Bahá'ís illuminates the depth of animosity and prejudice directed towards them — as well as the degree of ignorance regarding the basic principles and history of the Bahá'í Faith.

Despite the overwhelming proof that the Bahá'í community in Iran is being persecuted solely because of its religious beliefs, the Iranian government continues — in both public and private forums — to justify its behavior with unsubstantiated accusations.

Here follow some of the principal accusations advanced by the government:

THE ACCUSATION: That Bahá'ís were supporters of the Pahlavi regime and the late Shah of Iran; that they collaborated with SAVAK, the secret police; and that the Bahá'í Faith is a political organization opposed to the present Iranian government.

THE REALITY: Bahá'ís are required by the basic principles of their Faith to show loyalty and obedience to the government of the country in which they live. The Bahá'í community in Iran thus did not oppose the Pahlavi regime, just as it does not oppose the present government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Indeed, members of the community

allowed to administer such properties without undue interference until the change of government in 1979.

One of the first acts of the new government was to confiscate the Umana Company and all its holdings. This meant that in one stroke all Bahá'í community properties were arbitrarily transferred to the state without compensation. The government also

have obeyed every law and instruction of the present government, including the instruction to disband all Bahá'í administrative institutions in Iran.

Bahá'í principles also require the avoidance of any form of involvement in partisan politics. Accordingly, Iranian Bahá'ís were precluded by membership in their faith from accepting cabinet posts or similar political positions under the Pahlavi regime. They did not collaborate with SAVAK. On the contrary, the Pahlavi regime consistently persecuted the Bahá'í Faith, and SAVAK was one of the main agencies of this persecution.

The Iranian government has alleged that certain SAVAK officials were Bahá'ís. These allegations are completely untrue, fabricated to mask the religious nature of the persecutions.

Indeed, the non-political nature of the Bahá'í case was significantly bolstered by the 1996 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance. Professor Abdelfattah Amor of Tunisia wrote: “With regard to the Bahá'ís, the Special Rapporteur hopes that a clear distinction will be drawn between questions of belief or other questions of a political nature. In that connection, it should not be presumed that the entire community has been politicized or is engaged in political or espionage activities. Considering the religious principles of the Bahá'í community, the Special Rapporteur believes that there should not be any controls that might, through prohibition, restrictions or discrimination, jeopardize the right to freedom of belief or the right to manifest one's belief.”

(continued on page 62)

confiscated the assets of all Bahá'í welfare agencies, which provided services to people of all religions on an equal basis.

Among the government's next steps were to desecrate and in many cases destroy Bahá'í holy places throughout Iran. As noted, these properties include the holiest Bahá'í shrine in Iran, the House of the Báb

THE ACCUSATION: That Bahá'ís are heretics or enemies of Islam.

THE REALITY: Such charges are false. The Bahá'í Faith is widely recognized as an independent world religion — even by Islamic scholars. As long ago as 1924, a Sunni appellate court in Egypt recognized that the Bahá'í Faith was an independent world religion, stating that, in its judgment, “The Bahá'í Faith is a new religion entirely independent.... No Bahá'í therefore can be regarded as Muslim or vice versa, even as no Buddhist, Brahmin or Christian can be regarded as Muslim.” Accordingly, no charge of heresy can be made.

Bahá'ís revere Muhammad and His Book, the Qur'an, as they do Jesus, Buddha, and the founders of the other great religions. Indeed, alone among the followers of the world's other major independent religions, only Bahá'ís recognize the station of Muhammad as a Prophet of God.

THE ACCUSATION: That Bahá'ís are agents of Zionism.

THE REALITY: This charge is based on the fact that the Bahá'í World Centre is in Israel. The Bahá'í World Centre was, however, established on Mt. Carmel in the 19th century, long before the State of Israel came into existence, in accordance with the explicit instructions of Bahá'u'lláh, who was exiled there from Iran.

THE ACCUSATION: That Bahá'ís are involved with prostitution, adultery and immorality.

in Shiraz, which was confiscated and then destroyed. The House of Bahá'u'lláh in Takur, where the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith spent His childhood, met a similar fate: it was demolished and the site was offered for sale to the public.

In Tehran and other cities throughout Iran, Bahá'í buildings were looted and burned, Bahá'í cemeteries were bulldozed and Bahá'í graves were broken open.

THE REALITY: This charge, like the others, is without foundation. Bahá'ís have a strict moral code and attach great importance to chastity and to the institution of marriage.

The Bahá'í marriage ceremony is not recognized in Iran and no civil marriage ceremony exists. Consequently, Bahá'ís have been faced with the choice of denying their faith in order to be married according to the rites of one of the religions recognized in Iran, or of marrying in accordance with the rites of their own faith. They have consistently chosen to be married in accordance with Bahá'í law. The government does not recognize these marriages and denounces Bahá'í wives as prostitutes.

The other charges of adultery and immorality against Bahá'ís are based on the fact that, in accordance with the Bahá'í principle of the equality of men and women, there is no segregation of the sexes at Bahá'í gatherings.

THE ACCUSATION: That the Bahá'í Faith is not a religion but a political movement, devised by colonial powers in the 1800s to influence and control the Persian government.

THE REALITY: The Bahá'í Faith has been widely recognized by Western historians, religious leaders, and others as an independent world religion. Its founding had nothing to do with the work of British or other colonial powers. Moreover, as noted, the teachings of the Faith explicitly prohibit Bahá'ís from involvement in partisan politics.

In Tehran, as noted earlier, the Bahá'ís have long been forced to bury their dead in a barren stretch of land reserved by the authorities for “infidels.” Having access to their own cemeteries is especially important to Bahá'ís because, as might be expected, they are not allowed to bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries.



Chapter V

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE PRESENT DAY status of human rights and social reform in the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot be adequately understood without taking into account the historical background of persecution against the Bahá'í community — a history that does much to explain the cultural crisis gripping Iranian society today as its leadership struggles to face the challenge of modernity.

The Bahá'í Faith has been persecuted in Iran since its founding there in the mid-1800s. Early followers faced violent opposition from both the Islamic religious authorities and succeeding dynasties. It has been estimated that some 20,000 persons perished in these pogroms during the nineteenth century.

The illustration at top left, depicting the death of an early Bahá'í, appeared in the Persian magazine, Imá'mat, circa 1911. The photo bottom left, a Bahá'í father and son (left) in chains after being arrested with fellow Bahá'ís shown in a photograph taken around 1896. Both were subsequently executed.

.....
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succeeding dynasties.*
.....



The takeover of the National Bahá'í Centre in Tehran during the Khomeini regime, 1979.

The persecutions have continued intermittently in the twentieth century, coinciding most often with the need of various governments to shore up support with certain elements of Iran's Islamic leadership. And they have come regardless of the leaders' political orientation.

Some of the outbreaks against Bahá'ís were directed by local or regional authorities. In 1903, for example, 101 Bahá'ís were killed in the city of Yazd after the populace was incited by hostile mullahs. At other times the oppression of Bahá'ís was made a part of official national policy. During the early years of the Pahlavi regime (1927 to 1979), the government formalized a policy of discrimination against the Bahá'ís as a concession to the clergy. Beginning in 1933, Bahá'í literature was banned, Bahá'í marriages were not recognized, and Bahá'ís in public service were demoted or fired. Bahá'í schools — of which there were some 50 in



Mullah Falsafi supervising workmen in the act of destroying the dome of the National Bahá'í Center in 1955, Tehran.

the country — were forced to close.

Another round of persecutions commenced in 1955, when the Pahlavi regime allowed the nationwide broadcast of a series of incendiary sermons against the Bahá'ís by a leading Shia preacher in Tehran — apparently hoping to make the Bahá'ís a scapegoat to deflect attention from unpopular government policies. Both the national and army radio stations were put at the disposal of the responsible cleric, Sheikh Muhammad Taqi Falsafi, who joined the Shah's Minister of Defense, General Batmangelich, in demolishing the dome of Bahá'í national headquarters with pickaxes. A wave of anti-Bahá'í violence swept the country. Murders, rapes and robberies were reported in many areas, while the government assured the Majlis that it had ordered the suppression of all activities of “the Bahá'í sect.”



Successive stages of the demolition of the House of the Báb. The first image is an interior room in early 1979; the second photo shows Revolutionary Guards in the process of destruction; the third the collapse of the roof.



Bahá'ís understand that this pattern of persecution is a manifestation of the misunderstanding and fear that often occur when a new religion emerges from the matrix of a well-established orthodoxy. The pattern has been repeated through the ages; virtually all of the world's great religions have faced intense persecution at their birth.

In the case of the Bahá'í Faith, the teachings of its two Founders, especially when viewed through the lens of traditional Islam, are as challenging as those of any Prophet in ancient times.



The initial wave of persecution came in response to the claims of a young Iranian merchant, known to history as the Báb, who announced in Shiraz in May 1844 that He was the bearer of a new revelation from God. His primary mission, the Báb said, was to prepare humanity for the advent of "Him Whom God Shall Make Manifest," the universal divine

Messenger anticipated in the scriptures of all the major religions.

The teachings of the Báb called for the spiritual and moral reformation of Persian society, and for the upliftment of the station of women and the poor. His promotion of education and the useful sciences was also revolutionary. Such progressive and idealistic teachings, which made a clear break with the Islamic frame of reference, were rapidly embraced by thousands of followers and were seen by both secular and

The area is completely razed in preparation for the later construction of the Mosque of Mihdi. The white circles on the images below indicate the location of the House of the Báb. The last photo shows the Mosque in 1994.

religious authorities as a threat to their power. Widespread persecutions ensued, and, as noted above, some 20,000 believers, who were known as Bábís, paid with their lives. The Báb Himself was executed by the government in 1850.

Among the followers of the Báb was an Iranian nobleman named Bahá'u'lláh. In 1863 He announced that He was the Messenger the Báb had heralded, founding the Bahá'í Faith, which develops and extends many of the teachings and principles introduced by the Báb. The central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's message is that humanity is a single race and that the day has come for unification into one global society. "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens," wrote Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'u'lláh taught that there is only one God, and that all of the world's religions are expressions of a single, unfolding divine plan, "the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future."

Bahá'ís believe that God progressively reveals religious truth to humanity through a series of divine Messengers, each of Whom has founded a great religion. These Messengers have included Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad; the most recent are the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Others will follow in ages to come.

The idea that there should be new Messengers of God after Muhammad is viewed by many Muslims as heresy. In the Qur'an, Muhammad referred to Himself



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.....

as the “Seal of the Prophets,” and most Muslim scholars interpret this to mean that He would be the last Messenger of God.

Bahá'ís, however, believe that the coming of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh poses no contradiction to Islamic teachings or those of any of the other revealed religions. Bahá'ís understand that Muhammad ended or “sealed” the prophetic cycle. Then, with the advent of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, a new era of religious fulfillment began. Bahá'u'lláh referred to this new period in human history as the “stage of maturity.” Bahá'ís believe that this is all in accordance with the prophecies of Islam and the world's other major religions.

Other aspects of the Bahá'í teachings also arouse opposition among some followers of Islam. In outlining His vision for a new world civilization, Bahá'u'lláh advocated a series of highly progressive social principles. These include the elimination of all forms of prejudice; equality between the sexes; the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth; universal education; the harmony of science and religion; a sustainable balance between human society and the natural world; and the establishment of a world federal system, based on collective security and the oneness of humanity.

Some fundamentalist Muslims view the progressive nature of these teachings, such as the equality of women and the absence of religious clergy, as particularly antithetical to the traditions of Islam. To Iran's Shia establishment, especially — and also to many among their Sunni Muslim counterparts — the emergence of an independent religion that postdates the Qur'an by almost thirteen centuries is not only theologically abhorrent but threatens the system of patronage, endowments, political influence, and social perquisites to which they lay claim. The effect has been to arouse in the Shia establishment a determination to extinguish the new faith and suppress its followers.



The words, “Enemy of Islam,” were found written on the leg of Dr. Masih Farhangi, a Bahá’í who was executed in Tehran on 24 June 1981.

The persecution of the Bahá’ís in Iran is not related to any underlying issue of ethnicity or political agenda. The overwhelming majority of Iranian Bahá’ís come from the same Persian and Azerbaijani ethnic stock as the rest of the population, and they represent a cross section of Iran’s social classes.

Only their religious beliefs distinguish them from their fellow countrymen — beliefs which the Bahá’í teachings forbid them from imposing on others. Paradoxically, because of the control exercised by the Islamic clergy over the media of communication, the nature of Bahá’í beliefs remains virtually unknown to a public that has been systematically taught to fear and hate them.

The Iranian Bahá’í community has itself consistently been denied the use of any means of mass communication, including radio, television, newspapers, films, the distribution of literature and public lectures. The result has been widespread, unreasoning prejudice.

.....

The international response

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY has responded to the persecution of the Bahá'í community in Iran with overwhelming sympathy, expressing concern for the Bahá'ís and condemnation of the Iranian government. The Bahá'í community believes that this outpouring has been a strong restraining force against the government, preventing a pogrom on a much greater scale.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has passed more than 20 resolutions expressing concern about reports of human rights violations in Iran, and each has made specific mention of the situation of the Bahá'í community there. [*See Appendix II*]. The specific reference to a religious community is quite unusual for the Commission, which normally confines itself to expressions of diplomatic concern and general references to charges of human rights violations and discrimination.

Following the lead of the Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations General Assembly itself has since 1985 approved some 17 resolutions that have specifically mentioned the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran and expressed concern over reports of human rights violations there.

Virtually all of these resolutions have called on Iran to stop violating the rights of Bahá'ís and to abide by the various international covenants on human rights that the government has freely signed. UN resolutions have also called explicitly for the “emancipation” of the Bahá'ís of Iran.

Among the most salient features of the United Nations' attention to the Bahá'í case has been the continuing investigations conducted by a succession of highly regarded human rights specialists. Each was appointed by the Commission on Human Rights and given the mandate to probe into the human rights situation in Iran. And each has reported extensively on the real and serious nature of the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran, lending unimpeachable credibility to the Bahá'í case.

The first Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, as these investigators are called, was Andres Aguilar of

Venezuela, who was appointed in 1984. After his resignation in 1986, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, a law professor and human rights expert from El Salvador, was appointed to the position. Following Mr. Galindo Pohl's departure in 1994, the Commission appointed Maurice Copithorne, a noted Canadian jurist, as its Special Representative for Iran. Unfortunately, as part of an effort to engage Iran in a "human rights dialogue," the Commission on Human Rights stopped appointing Special Representatives in 2002. And in many respects, the situation has grown worse since that time.

Nevertheless, the Commission's Special Representatives have produced over the years a series of extremely important and influential reports to the United Nations on the situation in Iran. Gathering their information from a variety of sources and — in at least four cases — making visits to Iran, Special Representatives have managed to catalogue the whole range of abuses and persecutions which the Bahá'í community in Iran has experienced.

For example, Mr. Galindo Pohl's 1990 report to the General Assembly noted that he had received extensive documentation that provides "evidence of discrimination, confiscation, rejection by universities, suspension of pensions, demands for the return of pensions earned and paid, denial of passports and other irregularities."

The report added that "it would seem that the attitude towards the Bahá'ís and their situation depends on the temperament and personal convictions of individual officials. This keeps the Bahá'ís in a perpetual state of uncertainty about their activities."

In Mr. Copithorne's 1998 report to the General Assembly, he wrote that continuing reports of violations of human rights against the Bahá'ís force him "to conclude that the pattern of persecution of members of this community has not abated."

And in his last report, released in 2002, Mr. Copithorne said that while there had been "some hopeful signs" concerning the "commutation of death sentences" and "the release of prisoners," the Bahá'í community "continues to be subject to harassment and discrimination in the areas of, inter alia, education, employment, travel, housing and



Diane Ala'i, a Bahá'í International Community representative to the United Nations, addresses the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

the enjoyment of cultural activities.” Seven Bahá’ís were in prison at that time, he said, and “Bahá’í property continues to be subject to confiscation.”

Of interest, Mr. Copithorne also expressed a conviction that the “Bahá’í Question” policy is still operative.

Also of concern is the sentence issued by a judge of the Supreme Office of Control and Review, Hamzih Khalili, on 15 September 2001, in the context of an appeal by the Muslim owners of property rented to the Baha’is that was confiscated in 1998. According to an unofficial translation to which the Special Representative has had access, the verdict declares that the “seizure and confiscation of the properties belonging to the misguided sect of Baha’ism is legally and religiously justifiable” and states that “the cultural activities of the misguided sect of Baha’ism — as prescribed by the order of His Excellency the Supreme Leader — do need to be seriously opposed”. This would seem to indicate that the 1991 memorandum on “The Baha’i Question”, issued by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and approved by the Supreme Leader, is still in force and therefore that discrimination against Baha’is continues to be official practice, a situation the Special Representative deeply deplors.

As well, in 1996, United Nations support for the Bahá’í case was further strengthened by the release of a report by the UN’s Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, which called on Iran to end its ban on Bahá’í institutions and other oppressive measures. Authored by Professor Abdelfattah Amor, a noted Tunisian legal expert, the report explicitly stated that the persecution of the Bahá’ís was based on religious intolerance.

More recently, in 2003, the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance took note of the continuing confiscations, imprisonments, and efforts to block Bahá’í youth from receiving higher education, and concluded:

While noting some promised improvements in treatment of the Baha’i minority, the Special Rapporteur is of the view that the measures taken by the Iranian authorities to end the persecution of Baha’is, including by non-State entities, and to guarantee them the same rights as any other Iranian citizen are still inadequate. He

again reminds the Iranian authorities of the need to ensure respect for the relevant provisions of international law, including article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. In addition, as a religious minority, Baha'is are entitled to the respect due to all other religious minorities.

In addition to efforts by the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies and agencies, numerous national legislatures and regional bodies have spoken out against Iran's treatment of the Bahá'í community over the last twenty years. Expressions of concern for Iran's Bahá'ís have come from the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and from the legislatures of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, among others. Many heads of state and government leaders have also voiced their dismay over Iran's treatment of the Bahá'ís.

International and national non-governmental organizations have also risen to the defense of Iran's Bahá'ís. Amnesty International, the Minority Rights Group, and Middle East Watch, among others, have closely monitored the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran and published extensive reports that confirm the persecutions there.

The world's news media, as well, have reported extensively on the persecution of Iran's Bahá'í community. Major articles and editorials which detail, confirm and condemn the persecutions have appeared in *Le Monde*, the *Times of London*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Economist*, the *Times of India*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* — as well as smaller and lesser known newspapers such as the *Uganda Times*, the *Papua New Guinea Post Courier*, the *Straits Times of Singapore*, and *La Republica* in Panama City. The Associated Press, Reuters, and the Agence France-Presse have also carried numerous dispatches on the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran and the response of international organizations and agencies.

In many respects the Bahá'í case has been a model for how international human rights machinery can be used to protect an oppressed minority. Thanks to international support for the Bahá'ís, the wholesale genocide of the Bahá'í community in Iran has so far been prevented.

CONCLUSION AND
SUMMARY

THE WORLDWIDE BAHÁ'Í community is today one of the most diverse and widespread organizations on earth. Comprising individuals from virtually every nation, ethnic group, trade, profession, and social or economic class, more than five million followers of the Bahá'í Faith reside in at least 235 countries and territories. They represent some 2,100 different tribes, racial and ethnic groups, and come from every religious background: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Sikh, Jain, and animist, as well as from non-religious backgrounds.

Yet in the land where their religion originated, Bahá'ís continue to face a campaign of systematic, centrally directed persecution. At best, by denying them basic rights and freedoms, the government hopes merely to block the growth and development of the Bahá'í community, while keeping it as a ready scapegoat for its own failures. At worst, the government harbors the goal of exterminating the Bahá'í community as a viable entity in Iran and erasing all traces of its culture.

During the 1980s Bahá'ís were executed, tortured, imprisoned, deprived of jobs, pensions and educational opportunities — solely because of their religious beliefs. In the 1990s some aspects of this persecution subsided as a result of international pressure. However, in 1993 came the exposure of a secret governmental plan to suffocate the Bahá'í community.

Subsequent actions — ranging from random killings, revolving door imprisonment, arbitrary arrest and harassment, denial of access to higher education, the destruction of important Bahá'í holy sites, and the continued efforts to deprive Bahá'ís of their livelihood — reveal the Iranian government's intention of continuing its efforts to destroy the Bahá'í community without attracting international attention.

Indeed, as of the time of publication of this booklet, the signs point only towards increasing problems for Iran's innocent Bahá'ís. The arbitrary arrests and detentions of some 35 Bahá'ís around the country in March, April and May 2005 exemplify the worsening situation. Held incommunicado for periods ranging from one week to three months, these prisoners were held without any formal charges while personal possessions were seized by government agents from their homes in wanton searches. Other incidents in Yazd in January and February, involving the beating of several Bahá'ís and the burning of a Bahá'í-owned business, along with other short term arrests and detentions, point to ominous signs for the future.

For most people, whatever their religious background, the continued campaign against the Bahá'ís defies rational explanation. The Bahá'í community in Iran poses no threat to the Iranian authorities. The fundamental principles of the Bahá'í Faith require its followers to be obedient to their government and to avoid partisan political involvement, subversive activity, and all forms of violence.

.....
On the Bahá'í question, the Iranian government has been utterly silent. There has been no admission of the government's campaign against Iran's Bahá'í community and the need for reform that it represents, let alone public statements that might somehow pave the way for recognition of the Bahá'í community's fundamental rights.
.....

.....
*Continued
international
monitoring remains
the only form of
protection for Iran's
Bahá'ís.*
.....

In recent years, Iran has sought to portray itself as ready to rejoin the world community as a respected partner in international affairs, projecting an image of tolerance and civility. President Khatami, for example, spoke of humanity's entry into a "new century of humanity, understanding, and durable peace."

Yet on the Bahá'í question, the Iranian government has been utterly silent. There has been no admission of the government's campaign against Iran's Bahá'í community and the need for reform that it represents, let alone public statements that might somehow pave the way for recognition of the Bahá'í community's fundamental rights.

In this regard, continued international monitoring remains the only form of protection for Iran's Bahá'ís. Any lessening of international support for the Bahá'í community will be perceived by the Iranian authorities as condoning the persecution of the Bahá'ís at the least, and therefore as a license to continue their campaign with impunity.

The Bahá'ís in Iran seek no special privileges. They seek only their rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to life, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to education and work, and the right to profess and practice their religion.

What is needed are legal and entirely public steps that will firmly establish the complete emancipation of the Bahá'ís of Iran. Only then can it be said that Iran has truly complied with its oft-stated commitment to universal human rights.

Appendix I:

BAHÁ'ÍS KILLED SINCE 1978

NO.	NAME	ROLE*	DATE	PLACE	METHOD
1978					
1.	Mr. Ahmad Ismá'ílí		1978	Ahram	Killed
2.	Mr. Díyá'u'lláh Haqíqat		Aug 13	Jahrum	Killed
3.	Mr. Shír-Muhammad Dastpish		December	Buyr-Ahmad	Mobbed
4.	Mrs. 'Avad-Gul Fahandizh		Dec 14	Shíráz	Mobbed
5.	Mr. Sifatu'lláh Fahandizh		Dec 14	Shíráz	Mobbed
6.	Mr. Khusraw Afnání		Dec 22	Míyán-Duáb	Mobbed
7.	Mr. Parvíz Afnání		Dec 22	Míyán-Duáb	Mobbed
1979					
8.	Mr. Ibráhím Ma'navi		early 1979	Hisár	Killed
9.	Mr. Háji-Muhammad 'Azizi		Jan 9	Khurmúj	Beaten
10.	Mr. Husayn Shakurí		Apr 2	Ushnavíyyih	Killed
11.	Mr. 'Alí-Akbar Khursandí	LSA	Apr 12	Tehran	Hanged
12.	Mr. Bahár Vujdáni		Sep 27	Mahábád	Executed
13.	Mr. 'Alí Sattárádíh		Oct 28	Búkán	Killed
14.	Mr. 'Azamatu'lláh Fahandizh		Dec 14	Shíráz	Executed
1980					
15.	Mr. Habíbu'lláh Panáhi		Feb 4	Urúmíyyih	Assassinated
16.	Mr. Ghulám-Husayn A'zamí		May 6	Tehran	Executed
17.	Mr. 'Alí-Akbar Mu'íní		May 6	Tehran	Executed
18.	Mr. Badi'u'lláh Yazdání		May 6	Tehran	Executed
19.	Mr. Parviz Bayáni		May 11	Píránshahr	Executed
20.	Mr. Mir-Asadu'lláh Mukhtarí		May 18	Andrún	Stoned
21.	Mr. Hasan Ismá'ílzádíh		June	Sanandaj	Killed
22.	Mr. Yúsuf Subhání		Jun 27	Tehran	Executed
23.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Astání	LSA	Jul 14	Tabríz	Executed
24.	Dr. Farámarz Samandari	LSA	Jul 14	Tabríz	Executed
25.	Mr. Muhammad Akbarí		Jul 16	Rasht	Executed

* Many of those killed or executed played a leadership role in the Iranian Bahá'í community. The acronym "LSA" in this column indicates that the person was a member of a local Spiritual Assembly, the community-elected local Bahá'í governing council. "NSA" identifies a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran, the national-level governing council. "ABM" identifies an "auxiliary board member," an appointed leadership position within the Bahá'í administrative framework. "CBC" identifies a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, an appointed leadership position which oversees the auxiliary board members.

NO.	NAME	ROLE*	DATE	PLACE	METHOD
1980 <i>(continued)</i>					
26.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Mahbubiyán		Jul 30	Tehran	Executed
27.	Mr. Dhabihu'lláh Mu'mini		Aug 15	Tehran	Executed
28.	Mr. Núru'lláh Akhtar-Khávari	ABM	Sep 8	Yazd	Executed
29.	Mr. 'Azizu'lláh Dhabíhiyán	ABM	Sep 8	Yazd	Executed
30.	Mr. Firaydún Faridání	ABM	Sep 8	Yazd	Executed
31.	Mr. Mahmúd Hasanzádi		Sep 8	Yazd	Executed
32.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-Vahháb Kázimi-Manshádi		Sep 8	Yazd	Executed
33.	Mr. Jalál Mustaqím	LSA	Sep 8	Yazd	Executed
34.	Mr. 'Ali Mutahari	LSA	Sep 8	Yazd	Executed
35.	Mr. Ridá Firúzi		Nov 9	Tabriz	Executed
36.	Mr. Muhammad-Husayn Ma'súmi		Nov 23	Núk, Birjand	Burned
37.	Mrs. Shikkar-Nisá Ma'súmi		Nov 23	Núk, Birjand	Burned
38.	Mr. Bihruz Saná'i		Dec 17	Tehran	Executed
1981					
39.	Dr. Manúchihr Hakim	NSA	Jan 12	Tehran	Assassinated
40.	Mr. Mihdi Anvari		Mar 17	Shiráz	Executed
41.	Mr. Hidáyatu'lláh Dihqání		Mar 17	Shiráz	Executed
42.	Mrs. Núráníyyih Yárshátr		Apr	Shiráz	Assassinated
43.	Mr. Sattár Khushkhú		Apr 30	Shiráz	Executed
44.	Mr. Ihsánu'lláh Mihdi-Zádi		Apr 30	Shiráz	Executed
45.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Vahdat	ABM	Apr 30	Shiráz	Executed
46.	Mr. Muhammad (Suhráb) Habibi	LSA	Jun 14	Hamadán	Executed
47.	Mr. Muhammad-Baqir (Suhayl) Habíbi	LSA	Jun 14	Hamadán	Executed
48.	Mr. Husayn Khándil	LSA	Jun 14	Hamadán	Executed
49.	Mr. Tarázu'lláh Khuzayn	LSA	Jun 14	Hamadán	Executed
50.	Mr. Husayn Mutlaq	LSA	Jun 14	Hamadán	Executed
51.	Dr. Firúz Na'ími	LSA	Jun 14	Hamadán	Executed
52.	Dr. Nasir Vafá'i	LSA	Jun 14	Hamadán	Executed
53.	Mr. Buzurg 'Alaviyán	LSA	Jun 23	Tehran	Executed
54.	Mr. Háshim Farnúsh	ABM LSA	Jun 23	Tehran	Executed
55.	Mr. Farhang Mavaddat	LSA	Jun 23	Tehran	Executed
56.	Dr. Masih Farhangí	CBC ASIA	Jun 24	Tehran	Executed
57.	Mr. Bad'ulláh Farid		Jun 24	Tehran	Executed
58.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Pústchí		Jun 24	Tehran	Executed
59.	Mr. Varqá Tibyániyán (Tibyáni)		Jun 24	Tehran	Executed
60.	Mr. Kamálu'd-Din Bakhtávar		Jul 26	Mashhad	Executed
61.	Mr. Ni'matu'llah Kátibpúr Shahidi		Jul 26	Mashhad	Executed
62.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-'Alí Asadyári	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
63.	Mr. Husayn Asadu'lláh-Zadeh	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
64.	Mr. Mihdi Báhiri	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
65.	Dr. Masrúr Dakhilí	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
66.	Dr. Parváz Firúzi	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
67.	Mr. Manúchihr Khádí'i	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
68.	Mr. Alláh-Virdi Mitháqi		Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
69.	Mr. Habíbu'lláh Tahqíqi	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
70.	Mr. Ismá'il Ziháb	LSA	Jul 29	Tabriz	Executed
71.	Mr. Husayn Rastigar-Námdár		Aug 5	Tehran	Executed
72.	Mr. Habíbu'llah 'Ázizi	LSA	Aug 29	Tehran	Executed
73.	Mr. Bahman 'Atifi		Sep 11	Dáryún, Isf.	Executed
74.	Mr. 'Izzat Atifi		Sep 11	Dáryún, Isf.	Executed
75.	Mr. Ahmad Ridvání		Sep 11	Dáryún, Isf.	Executed

NO.	NAME	ROLE*	DATE	PLACE	METHOD
1981 <i>(continued)</i>					
76.	Mr. Atá'u'lláh Rawhání		Sep 11	Dáryún, Isf.	Executed
77.	Mr. Gushtásb Thábit-Rásikh		Sep 11	Dáryún, Isf.	Executed
78.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Sipíhr-Arfá		Oct 23	Tehran	Executed
79.	Mr. Mihdí Amin Amin	NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
80.	Mr. Jalál 'Azizi	NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
81.	Dr. 'Izzatu'lláh Furúhi	ABM NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
82.	Mrs. Zhínús Ni'mat Mahmúdi	ABM NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
83.	Dr. Mahmúd Majdhúb	NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
84.	Mr. Qudratu'lláh Rawhání	NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
85.	Dr. Sírús Rawshani	NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
86.	Mr. Kámrán Samimi	NSA	Dec 27	Tehran	Executed
1982					
87.	Mrs. Shiva Mahmudi Asadu'llah-Zadeh	LSA	Jan 4	Tehran	Executed
88.	Mr. Iskandar 'Azizi	LSA	Jan 4	Tehran	Executed
89.	Mrs. Shidrukh Amir-Kiyá Baqa		Jan 4	Tehran	Executed
90.	Mr. Fathu'lláh Firdawsí	LSA	Jan 4	Tehran	Executed
91.	Mr. Khusraw Muhandisi	LSA	Jan 4	Tehran	Executed
92.	Mr. Kúrush Talá'i	LSA	Jan 4	Tehran	Executed
93.	Mr. Atá'u'lláh Yávári	LSA	Jan 4	Tehran	Executed
94.	Mr. Ibráhím Khayrkháh		Feb 22	Tehran	Executed
95.	Mr. Husayn Vahdat-i-Haq		Feb 28	Tehran	Executed
96.	Mr. 'Askar Muhammadi		Apr 2	Rahímkhán, Kírmán	Assassinated
97.	Mr. Ihsánu'lláh Khayyámi		Apr 12	Urúmiyyih	Executed
98.	Mr. 'Azizu'lláh Gulshani		Apr 29	Mashhad	Executed
99.	Mrs. Ishraqiyyih Faruhar	LSA	May 8	Karaj	Executed
100.	Mr. Mahmud Faruhar	LSA	May 8	Karaj	Executed
101.	Mr. Bad'u'lláh Haqpaykar	LSA	May 8	Karaj	Executed
102.	Mr. Agahu'lláh Tizfahm		May 10	Urúmiyyih	Executed
103.	Miss Jaláliyyih Mushta il Uskú'i		May 10	Urúmiyyih	Executed
104.	Mrs. Irán Rahimpúr (Khurmá'i)		May 12	Dizfúl	Executed
105.	Mr. Nasru'lláh Amini	LSA	May 16	Kháníábad, Tehe.	Executed
106.	Mr. Sa'du'lláh Bábázádeh	LSA	May 16	Kháníábad, Tehe.	Executed
107.	Mr. Atá'u'lláh Haqqání		Jun 1	Tehran	Killed
108.	Mr. Muhammad Abbási	LSA	Jul 9	Qazvín	Executed
109.	Mr. Jadidu'lláh Ashraf	LSA	Jul 9	Qazvín	Executed
110.	Manúchíhr Farzáníh Mu'ayyad	LSA	Jul 9	Qazvín	Executed
111.	Mr. Muhammad Mansúri	LSA	Jul 9	Qazvín	Executed
112.	Mr. Manúchíhr Vafá'i		Jul 9	Tehran	Assassinated
113.	Mr. 'Abbás-Ali Sadiqipur		Jul 15	Shíráz	Executed
114.	Mr. 'Ali Na'imiyán		Aug 11	Urúmiyyih	Executed
115.	Mr. Habibu'lláh Awji		Nov 16	Shíráz	Executed
116.	Mr. Dhíyá'u'lláh Ahrári	LSA	Nov 21	Shíráz	Executed
117.	Mr. Husayn Nayyiri-Isfahani		Nov 29	Isfahán	Died in Prison
118.	Mrs. Guldáníh 'Alipúr		Dec 24	Sári	Mobbed
1983					
119.	Mr. Hidáyatu'lláh Siyávushí	LSA	Jan 1	Shíráz	Executed
120.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Mahmúdnizhad	LSA ABM	Mar 12	Shíráz	Executed
121.	Mr. Rahmatu'lláh Vafá'i	LSA	Mar 12	Shíráz	Executed
122.	Mrs. Túbá Zá'irpúr		Mar 12	Shíráz	Executed
123.	Mr. Adadu'llah (Aziz) Zaydí		Apr 1	Miyán-Duáb	Killed

NO.	NAME	ROLE*	DATE	PLACE	METHOD
1983 (continued)					
124.	Mr. Jalál Hakímán		May 1	Tehran	Executed
125.	Mr. Suhayl Safá'í		May 1	Tehran	Executed
126.	Dr. Bahráman Afnán	LSA	Jun 16	Shíráz	Executed
127.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-Husayn Azadí	LSA	Jun 16	Shíráz	Executed
128.	Mr. Kúrush Haqbín	LSA	Jun 16	Shíráz	Executed
129.	Mr. 'Ináyatu'lláh Ishráqí		Jun 16	Shíráz	Executed
130.	Mr. Jamshíd Siyávushí	LSA	Jun 16	Shíráz	Executed
131.	Mr. Bahráman Yaldá'í		Jun 16	Shíráz	Executed
132.	Miss Shahín(Shírín) Dálvand		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
133.	Mrs. 'Izzat Jánamí Ishráqí		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
134.	Miss Ru'yá Ishráqí		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
135.	Miss Muná Mahmúdnizhád		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
136.	Miss Zarrín Muqímí-Abyáníh		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
137.	Miss Mahshíd Nírúmand		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
138.	Miss Símín Sábírí		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
139.	Mrs. Táhirih Arjumandí Siyávushí		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
140.	Miss Akhtar Thábit		Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
141.	Mrs. Nusrat Ghufrání Yaldá'í	LSA	Jun 18	Shíráz	Executed
142.	Mr. Suhayl Húshmand		Jun 28	Shíráz	Executed
143.	Mr. Ahmad-'Alí Thábit-Sarvístání		Jun 30	Shíráz	Died in Prison
144.	Mr. Muhammad Ishráqí	ABM	Aug 31	Tehran	Died in Prison
145.	Mr. Akbar Haqíqí		Sep 19	Khuy	Mobbed
146.	Mr. Bahman Díhqnání		Nov 19	Muhammadíyyih	Mobbed
147.	Mr. 'Abdu'l-Majíd Mutahhar		Dec 15	Isfahán	Died in Prison
1984					
148.	Mr. Rahmatu'lláh Hakímán		Jan 11	Kírmán	Died in Prison
149.	Mr. Ghulám-Husayn Hasanzádih-Shákírí		Mar 10	Tehran	Executed
150.	Mr. Muhsin Radaví		Mar 13	Tehran	Died in Prison
151.	Mr. Nusrat'ulláh Díyá'í		Mar 19	Báft, Kírmán	Died in Prison
152.	Mr. Kámrán Lutfí		Apr 9	Tehran	Executed
153.	Mr. Rahím Rahímíyán		Apr 9	Tehran	Executed
154.	Mr. Yadu'lláh Sábíríyán		Apr 9	Tehran	Executed
155.	Mr. Asadu'lláh Kámíl-Muqaddam		May 2	Tehran	Died in Prison
156.	Mr. Maqsúd 'Alízádih		May 5	Tabríz	Executed
157.	Mr. Jalál Payraví	ABM	May 5	Tabríz	Executed
158.	Mr. Jahángír Hidáyati	NSA	May 15	Tehran	Executed
159.	Mr. 'Alí-Muhammad Zamání		May 15	Tehran	Executed
160.	Mr. Nusratu'lláh Vahdat		Jun 17	Mashhad	Executed
161.	Mr. Ihsánu'lláh Kathírí		Jun 27	Tehran	Executed
162.	Dr. Manúchíhr Rúhí		Aug 16	Bujnúrd	Executed
163.	Mr. Aminu'lláh Qurbánpúr		Aug 25	near Tehran	Died in Prison
164.	Mr. Rustam Varjávandí		Sep 15	Tehran	Died in Prison
165.	Mr. Shápúr (Húshang) Markazi	NSA ABM	Sep 23	Tehran	Executed
166.	Mr. Fírúz Purdí		Oct 30	Mashhad	Executed
167.	Mr. Ahmad Bashírí	NSA	Nov 1	Tehran	Executed
168.	Mr. Yúnis Nawrúzi-Iránzád	LSA	Nov 1	Karaj	
169.	Mr. 'Alírídá Niyákán		Nov 11	Tabríz	Died in Prison
170.	Mr. Díyá'u'lláh Ma'í'í-Uskú'í		Nov 13	Tabríz	Died in Prison
171.	Dr. Farhád Asdaqí	NSA	Nov 19	Tehran	Executed
172.	Mr. Fírúz Atharí	LSA	Dec 9	Tehran (Karaj)	Executed
173.	Mr. Ghulám-Husayn Farhand	LSA	Dec 9	Tehran (Karaj)	Executed
174.	Mr. 'Ináyatu'lláh Haqíqí	LSA	Dec 9	Tehran (Karaj)	Executed

NO.	NAME	ROLE*	DATE	PLACE	METHOD
1984 <i>(continued)</i>					
175.	Mr. Jamál Káshání	LSA	Dec 9	Tehran (Karaj)	Executed
176.	Mr. Jamshíd Púr-Ustádkár	LSA	Dec 9	Tehran (Karaj)	Executed
177.	Dr. Rúhu'lláh Ta'lím	LSA	Dec 9	Tehran (Kírmánsháh)	Executed
1985					
178.	Mr. Rúhu'lláh Hasúrí		Jan 21	Yazd	Executed
179.	Mr. Rúhu'lláh Bahrámsháhi	LSA	Feb 25	Yazd	Executed
180.	Mr. Nusratu'lláh Subhání		Mar 5	Tehran	Executed
181.	Mr. 'Abbás Idilkháni		Aug 1	Tehran	Executed
182.	Mr. Rahmatu'lláh Vujdáni	LSA	Aug 31	Bandar-'Abbás	Executed
183.	Mr. Núr'ud-Din T'á'ifí		Oct 12	Gurgán (Kírmánsháh)	Died in Prison
184.	Mr. 'Azizu'lláh Ashjári		Nov 19	Tabríz	Executed
1986					
185.	Mr. Paymán Subhání (reported)		Apr 28	Saráván	Mobbed
186.	Mr. Sirru'lláh Vahdat-Nizámi		May 4	Tehran	Executed
187.	Mr. Fidrus Shabruk		May 9	Záhidán	Executed
188.	Mr. Farid Bihmardi	NSA	Jun 10	Tehran	Executed
189.	Mr. Habíbu'lláh Muhtadí		Aug 27	Tehran	Killed
190.	Mr. Bábak Tálíbí		Sep 2	Karaj	Beaten
191.	Mr. Iraj Mihdi-Nizhá		Sep 4	Bandar-'Abbás	Mobbed
1987					
192.	Mr. Ahmad Kávih		Jan 26	Isfahán	Killed
193.	Mr. Surúsh Jabbári		Mar 3	Tehran	Killed
194.	Mr. Abu'l-Qásim Sháiyiq		Mar 3	Tehran	Killed
195.	Mr. Ardishír Akhtarí		Sep 28	Tehran	Executed
196.	Mr. Amír-Husayn Nádíri		Sep 28	Tehran	Executed
1988					
197.	Mr. Bihnám Páshá'í		presumably Nov	Tehran	Executed
198.	Mr. Iradj Afshín		presumably Nov	Tehran	Executed
199.	Mr. Mihرداد Maqsudi		Feb 16	Urúmíyyih	Killed
1992					
200.	Mr. Bahman Samandari		Mar 18	Tehran	Executed
201.	Mr. Ruhu'lláh Ghedami		Jun 17	on Qum Highway	Killed
1995					
202.	Mr. Shirvin Falláh		Approx Dec	Arak	Killed
1997					
203.	Mr. Mansúr Dawlat		Apr 4	Kírmán	Killed
204.	Mr. Shahrám Reza'i		Jul 7	Rasht	Killed
205.	Mr. Mashá'lláh Enáyati		Jul 4	Isfahán	Beaten in prison
1998					
206.	Mr. Rúhu'lláh Rawháni		Jul 21	Isfahán	Executed

Appendix II

THE UNITED NATIONS' RESPONSE

Since 1980, human rights organs of the United Nations have been expressing concern about the tragic situation of the Bahá'í religious minority in Iran. This demonstration of international concern has played a critical role in moderating the actions of the Iranian authorities and providing a measure of security to the Bahá'í community.

A summary history of this issue at the United Nations is outlined below:

1980

Resolution 10 (XXXIII) (10.9.1980) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expresses profound concern for the Bahá'ís both individually and collectively, and invites the Government of Iran to protect their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

1981

Resolution 8 (XXXIV) (9.9.1981) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities draws the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the perilous situation facing the Bahá'ís and requests the Secretary-General to report on their plight to the next session of the Commission.

1982

Resolution 1982/27 (11.3.1982) of the Commission on Human Rights notes the Secretary-General's report on the Bahá'ís and requests him to establish direct contacts with the Government of Iran and to continue his efforts to ensure the Bahá'ís full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Grave concern for the Bahá'í minority is expressed by members of the Human Rights Committee at its 16th session, when the Committee discusses with representatives of the Iranian Government the preliminary report submitted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with its reporting obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Resolution 1982/25 (8.9.1982) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities recalls its earlier resolutions on the plight of the Bahá'ís and expresses its continuing concern at human rights violations in Iran.

1983

Resolution 1983/34 (8.3.1983) of the Commission on Human Rights expresses its profound concern at the religious persecution of the Bahá'ís and requests the Secretary-General to continue his direct contacts with the Government of Iran on the human rights situation in that country, "including the situation of the Bahá'ís."

Resolution 1983/14 (5.9.1983) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expresses its grave concern at the continuing religious persecution of the Bahá'ís and suggests that the Commission on Human Rights appoint a Special Rapporteur to study the human rights situation in Iran.

1984

Resolution 1984/54 (14.3.1984) of the Commission on Human Rights expresses its concern for the Bahá'í minority and requests its Chairman to appoint

a Special Representative to establish contacts with the Government of Iran and to make a thorough study of human rights in Iran.

Decision 1984/138 of the Economic and Social Council endorses the Commission's decision to appoint a Special Representative.

Resolution 1984/14 (29.8.1984) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expresses alarm at the continuing gross violations of human rights in Iran, including the religious persecution of the Bahá'ís, and welcomes the Commission's decision to appoint a Special Representative.

1985

Preliminary Report of the Special Representative to the Commission on Human Rights expresses great concern at the number and gravity of alleged violations of human rights in Iran, including denial of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Resolution 1985/39 (13.3.1985) of the Commission on Human Rights endorses the general observations of its Special Representative, expresses its deep concern at the number and gravity of alleged violations of human rights to which his preliminary report bears witness, extends his mandate, and requests him "...to present an interim report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís."

Decision 1985/148 of the Economic and Social Council endorses the Commission's decision.

Resolution 1985/17 (29.8.1985) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities welcomes the Commission's decision, expresses its alarm at the continuing reports of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Iran, "in particular at the evidence of persecution of the Bahá'í religious minority..." endorses the general observations of the Special Representative in his preliminary report, and expresses the hope that the initial contacts of the Government of Iran with the Special Representative will develop into a positive cooperation.

Resolution 40/141 (13.12.1985) of the General Assembly "Expresses its deep concern over the specific and detailed allegations of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to which the Special Representative refers in his interim report, and in particular, those related to the right to life, such as summary and arbitrary executions; the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to liberty and security of person and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention; the right to a fair trial; the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression; and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own

religion" (operative paragraph 2);

"Decides to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its forty-first session in order to examine this situation anew in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council" (operative paragraph 8).

1986

Resolution 1985/41 (12.3.1986) of the Commission on Human Rights "expresses its deep concern over the specific and detailed allegations of grave human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran to which the Special Representative refers in his report"; endorses his conclusion that "specific and detailed allegations concerning grave human rights violations" in Iran cannot be dismissed; decides to extend the mandate of the Commission's Special Representative and requests him to present an interim report on the situation, "including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís" to the General Assembly at its forty-first session and a final report to the Commission at its forty-third session in 1987.

Decision 1986/137 of the Economic and Social Council approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate and its request to the Special Representative to submit reports to the forty-first session of the General Assembly and the forty-third session of the Commission.

It is announced on 14 July 1986 that, in response to this request, the Chairman of the Commission appointed Mr. Reynaldo Galindo Pohl to serve as the Special Representative of the Commission.

Resolution 41/159 (4.12.1986) of the General Assembly "Expresses its deep concern over the specific and detailed allegations of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in particular over those related to the right to life, such as summary and arbitrary executions, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own religion";

"Requests the Commission on Human Rights to study carefully the final report of the Special Representative, as well as other information pertaining to the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to consider further steps for securing effective "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in that country";

Decides to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran includ-

ing the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its forty-second session....”

1987

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1987/55 (11.3.1987) of the Commission on Human Rights recalling its resolution 1986/41, extends the mandate of the Special Representative for one year; requests him to present an interim report on the human rights situation including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís; regrets “that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has so far provided no comment or information to the Special Representative and has not allowed him to visit the country”; again expresses “its deep concern over the numerous and detailed allegations of grave and extensive human rights violations to which the Special Representative refers in his report (E/CN.4/1987/23) and in particular, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of thought; conscience and religion and to freedom of expression, and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own religion”; requests “the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly, at its forty-second session on human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís....”

Decision 1987/150 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1987/12 (1.9.1987) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities refers to “various resolutions and documents published by other international bodies and organizations including resolutions ratified by the European Parliament and Council of Europe ... all of which have expressed great concern over the violations of human rights and violation of the most basic rights of the ethnic and religious minorities..”; learns “with renewed concern that the number of those allegedly executed by the ruling Government, including Bahá'ís and others, now exceeds 70,000...”; expresses “strong concern over the grave violations of human rights and basic freedom such as...the right to freedom of belief and religion...”; urges “determined protest by the Commission to the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning continuing disrespect for the Charter of the United Nations in relation to human rights”; and “requests the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and its Special Representative of the information obtained from the Sub-Commission on the grave violation of human rights and the most basic freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Resolution 42/136 (7.12.1987) of the General Assembly takes note of the Commission's resolution 1987/55 requesting the Special Representative “to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-second session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís...”; again expresses “its deep concern about the numerous and detailed allegations of grave human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran to which the Special Representative had referred in his report, namely, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression, and the right of religious minorities to profess and practice their own religion”; expresses “its grave concern, in particular, that although the Special Representative indicates that the number of alleged violations of the right to life has diminished over the past two years, according to information made available to him, some one hundred persons were alleged to have been executed in the period October 1986-September 1987 because of their political and religious convictions”; expresses “its deep concern at allegations that maltreatment and torture, both physical and psychological, are common practice in Iranian prisons during interrogation and before and after the final verdict, and at the existence of extremely summary and informal proceedings, unawareness on the part of the prisoners of specific accusations, lack of legal counsel and other irregularities with respect to fair trial”; endorses “the conclusion of the Special Representative that acts continue to occur in the Islamic Republic of Iran that are inconsistent with the provisions of international instruments....”; decides “to keep under consideration the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its forty-third session...”

1988

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1988/69 (10.3.1988) of the Commission on Human Rights recalls its decision to request the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly on human rights situation including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís; expresses “again its deep concern about the numerous detailed allegations of grave human rights violations... in particular those related to the right to life,... the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of expression...”; requests “the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session on the human rights situation, including the situation of minority groups, such as the

Bahá'ís, and a final report to the Commission at its forty-fifth session."

Decision 1988/137 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate. This decision refers also to Commission resolution 1984/54.

Resolution 43/137 (8.12.1988) of the General Assembly takes note of the Commission's resolution 1988/69 requesting the Special Representative "to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís...."; notes "the recent contacts between the Special Representative and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which it is hoped will lead to a state of full co-operation between the Special Representative and that Government, including a visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran, so that he can fulfil his mandate"; notes "that the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to be subjected to various forms of harassment and discrimination, although there are indications that the intensity of the campaign of persecution against the Bahá'ís has diminished somewhat in recent months, and that a number of them have been released from prison"; expresses once more "its deep concern about the numerous and detailed allegations of grave human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran to which the Special Representative had referred in his report, namely, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion"; expresses "its deep concern also at the existence of extremely summary, informal and irregular proceedings, failure to inform defendants of specific accusations against them, lack of legal counsel, absence of an appropriate instance for appeal and other irregularities that contravene international standards on fair trial"; endorses "the conclusion of the Special Representative that acts continue to occur in the Islamic Republic of Iran that are inconsistent with the provisions of international instruments..."; decides "to keep under consideration the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its forty-fourth session...."

1989

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1989/66 (7.3.1989) of the Commission on Human Rights recalling "...the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís..."; notes "that the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to be uncertain"; expresses once more "its deep concern over the numerous and detailed allegations of grave and extensive human rights violations to which the Special Representative

has referred in his reports, namely, those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and expression,"; requests "the Special Representative to present an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session on human rights situation in Iran, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís and a final report to the forty-sixth session of the Commission."

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1989/10 (31.8.1989) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities takes note "of numerous reports by United Nations special rapporteurs and by NGOs,..."; concerned "also at reports of denial of rights of minorities to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own beliefs"; is "further concerned at reports about persecution and detention of members of the Bahá'í community in the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Resolution 44/163 (15.12.1989) of the General Assembly takes note "with appreciation of the interim report of the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights"; takes note "of the view of the Special Representative that, in order to achieve full co-operation between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Special Representative, there is a need to proceed to another stage in the discharge of his mandate"; welcomes "the invitation by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Special Representative for him to visit that country"; decides "to continue its examination... during its forty-fifth session."

1990

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1990/79 (7.3.1990) of the Commission on Human Rights notes "the findings of the Special Representative on the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran"; expresses "its concern that testimony gathered by the Special Representative reiterated complaints about unlawful executions, torture, substitute prisoners, imprisonment beyond the period specified in the sentence, spontaneous decisions by low-ranking officials and the absence of council for defence as well as restrictions on the right to assemble..."; requests "the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís, and a final report to the Commission at its forty-seventh session."

Decision 1990/243 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1990/9 (30.8.1990) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities notes "that the

situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to be uncertain"; expresses "its deep concern about the grave violations of human rights namely those related to the right to life, the right to freedom from torture and from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and expression..."; decides "to consider the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'í, at its forty-third session."

Resolution 45/173 (18.12.1990) of the General Assembly noting "the findings of the Special Representative on the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran"; calls upon "the Islamic Republic of Iran to intensify its efforts to investigate and rectify the human rights issues raised by the Special Representative, in particular as regards the administration of justice and due process of law in order to comply with international instruments on human rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in these instruments"; notes "that the co-operation of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the Special Representative has improved and has included replies by the Government to allegations that have been transmitted to it, and urges the Government to reply in detail to all allegations referred to by the Special Representative in his reports."

1991

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1991/82 (7.3.1991) of the Commission on Human Rights noting further "the findings of the Special Representative on the situation of the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran"; welcomes "the full cooperation extended by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Special Representative, which has reached its highest level, as well as the intention of the Government to continue its full cooperation with the Special Representative"; requests "the Special Representative to maintain his contact and cooperation with the Government...and to report on further progress with regard to the recommendations contained in his report, on the basis of his mandate pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1984/54 of 14 March 1984"; also requests the Special Representative "to submit a report to be considered by the Commission which will consider the report with the view to its discontinuing the mandate if there is further progress achieved regarding his recommendations."

Decision 1991/261 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's request to the Special Representative to maintain his contacts and cooperation with the Gov-

ernment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to report on further progress.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1991/9 (23.8.1991) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities notes "that the situation of the Bahá'í community in the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to be a matter of great concern"; expresses "its deep concern at the escalating grave violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular of the right to life, the right to freedom from torture and from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and expression, and calls upon the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-eight session, to extend the mandate of the Special Representative and the monitoring of the situation of human rights"; decides "to consider the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'í community, at its forty-fourth session."

1992

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1992/67 (4.3.1992) of the Commission on Human Rights takes note "with appreciation of the report of the Special Representative of the Commission (E/CN.4/1992/34) and the observations contained therein"; expresses "its deep concern at the continuing reports of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran"; expresses "its concern more specifically at the main weaknesses, according to the Special Representative, of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely, the lack of guarantees of due process of law, discriminatory treatment of certain groups of citizens for reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá'ís..."; welcomes "the fact that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has permitted the Special Representative to visit the country and has continued to reply to allegations of human rights violations transmitted to it by the Special Representative"; calls upon the Government "to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in the international instruments"; decides "to extend the mandate of the Special Representative requesting him to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session"; decides "to continue its consideration of the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a matter of priority, at its forty-ninth session."

Decision 1992/239 of ECOSOC approves the Commission's decision to extend the Special Representative's mandate and its request to the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and a final report to the forty-ninth session of the Commission.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1992/15 (27.8.1992) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities notes “in particular that the situation of the Bahá’í community in the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to be a matter of concern”; condemns “the continuing grave violations of human rights by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially: (d) renewed persecution of religious minorities and summary killings of Bahá’ís.”

Resolution 47/146 (18.12.1992) of the General Assembly expresses “its concern at continuing reports of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”; expresses “its concern more specifically at the main criticisms according to the Special Representative of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely, the high number of executions, the practice of torture, the standard of the administration of justice, the absence of guarantees of due legal process, the treatment of the Bahá’í community and restriction of freedoms of expression, thought, opinion and press”; regrets “that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has not permitted the Special Representative to visit the country and failed to reply to allegations of human rights violations” and regrets also “that, as the Special Representative concluded, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not given adequate follow-up to many of the recommendations contained in the previous reports”; decides “to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran during its forty-eighth session under the item ‘Human rights questions’ in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights and the ECOSOC.”

1993

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1992/62 (10.3.1993) of the Commission on Human Rights, noting “the Special Representative’s ... view that during 1992 there was no appreciable progress in the Islamic Republic of Iran towards improved compliance with human rights standards in conformity with international instruments,” “expresses its deep concern at continuing reports of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; expresses “its concern more specifically at the main criticisms of the Special Representative of the ... discriminatory treatment of certain groups of citizens for reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá’ís,” while conveying “its regret that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has not granted the request of the Special Representative to visit the country for more than a year,” “calls upon the Government ... to comply with international instruments on human rights ... to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognised in these instruments,” and “decides to extend the mandate of the Special Repre-

sentative ... for a further year,” requesting “the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly ... on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá’ís,” continuing its consideration of Iran’s human rights situation “as a matter of priority, at its fiftieth session.”

Decision 1993/273 of ECOSOC approves the Commission’s decision to extend the mandate of the Special Representative for one year, to request him to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and to report to the Commission at its fiftieth session and to request to the Secretary-General to give all necessary assistance to the Special Representative.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1993/14 (20.4.1993) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, gravely concerned at “the systematic repression of the Bahá’í community and at the plight of the Iranian Kurds,” strongly condemns “the continuing and flagrant human rights violations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including: (d) The continued persecution of the Bahá’ís and other religious minorities,” and decides to “consider further the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of women and minority groups such as the Bahá’ís and the Kurds, at its forty-sixth session.”

Resolution 48/145 (20.12.1993) of the General Assembly expresses its concern “at the main criticisms of the Special Representative with regard to the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely, ... discriminatory treatment of certain groups of citizens by reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá’ís, whose existence as a viable religious community is threatened...,” also calls upon “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with international instruments on human rights, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in those instruments” and decides to “continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá’ís...”

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1994/73 (9.3.1994) of the Commission on Human Rights expresses its concern “at the main criticisms of the Special Representative with regard to the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely, ... discriminatory treatment of certain groups of citizens for reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá’ís, whose existence as a viable religious community in the Islamic Republic of Iran is threatened, as well as the ill-treatment of certain Christians and restrictions on the freedoms of

expression, thought, opinion and the press, and that, as noted by the Special Representative, there is continued discrimination against women,” also calls upon “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with international instruments on human rights, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in these instruments” and requests the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá’ís, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-first session.

Decision 1994/263 of ECOSOC approves the Commission’s decision to extend for a further year the mandate of the Special Representative, to request him to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá’ís, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-first session and to request the Secretary-General to give all necessary assistance to the Special Representative.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1994/16 (25.8.1994) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities deeply concerned “at extensive and continuing human rights violations by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including ... freedom of religion,” shocked “by the systematic repression of the Bahá’í community and at the situation of the Iranian Kurds and the Arab minority in Iran, and at increasing intolerance towards Christians, including recent murders of Christian religious ministers,” condemns “the flagrant violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran which, as noted by the Special Representative of the Commission, include: (d) Religious discrimination, notably against the Bahá’ís and Christian individuals and groups,” and requests the Secretary-General to “continue to keep the Sub-Commission informed of relevant reports and United Nations measures to prevent human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including, in particular, those concerning the situation of the Kurds and the Arab minority and the religious freedoms of the Bahá’í and Christian communities in Iran.”

Resolution 49/202 (23.12.1994) of the General Assembly expresses “its concern more specifically at the main criticisms of the Special Representative in his recent reports with regard to ... the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá’ís, whose existence as a viable religious minority is threatened ...,” urges “the Islamic

Republic of Iran to comply with international instruments on human rights, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups and other persons belonging to minorities, enjoy the rights recognized in those instruments”; and decides “to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá’ís, during its fiftieth session under the item entitled ‘Human rights questions’ in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council.”

1995

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1995/68 (8.3.1995) of the Commission on Human Rights expresses “its deep concern at continued violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including those highlighted by the Special Representative in his report, namely ... the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Baha’ís, whose existence as a viable religious community in the Islamic Republic of Iran is threatened” ... also urges “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State party to the International Covenants on Human Rights, to abide by its freely undertaken obligations under the Covenants and under other international instruments on human rights, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in these instruments,” further urges “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to intensify its efforts to investigate and rectify the human rights issues raised by the Special Representative in his observations, in particular with regard to the administration of justice and due process of law, and, in fulfilment of its obligations under article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to take steps to ensure the recognition and enjoyment of human rights of persons belonging to minorities” and requests “the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Baha’ís, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-second session.”

Decision 1995/279 of ECOSOC approves the Commission’s decision to extend for a further year the mandate of the Special Representative on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, to request him to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including

the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-second session and to request to the Secretary-General to give all necessary assistance to the Special Representative.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1995/18 (24.8.1995) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities deeply concerned at “extensive and continuing human rights violations by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including arbitrary and summary executions, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, unexplained disappearances, the absence of guarantees essential for the protection of the right to a fair trial and disregard for freedom of expression and freedom of religion,” noting “that relevant international organizations and bodies emphasize the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in intimidating and harassing the religious minorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran during the past year, in particular in the assassination of three Christian leaders,” condemns “the flagrant violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran which, as noted by the Special Representative of the Commission, include: (f) Religious discrimination, notably against Bahá'ís and Christian individuals and groups,” requests “the Secretary-General to continue to keep the Sub-Commission informed of relevant reports and United Nations measures to prevent human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including, in particular, those concerning the situation of the Kurds and the Arab minority and the religious freedoms and the emancipation of the Bahá'í and Christian communities in Iran.”

Resolution 50/188 (22.12.95) of the General Assembly expresses “its concern at violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular ... the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá'ís, whose existence as a viable religious community in the Islamic Republic of Iran is threatened ...,” urges “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State party to the International Covenants on Human Rights, to abide by its obligations freely undertaken under the Covenants and under other international instruments on human rights and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in those instruments,” and decides “to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, during its fifty-first session under the item entitled “Human rights questions,” on the basis of the report of the Special Representative and in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council.”

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1996/84 (24.4.1996) of the Commission on Human Rights expresses “its concern at the continuation of violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular ... the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Bahá'ís, whose existence as a viable religious community in the Islamic Republic of Iran is threatened...,” calls upon “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and to other minority religious groups, including Christians,” urges “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State party to the International Covenants on Human Rights, to abide by its obligations under the Covenants and under other international instruments on human rights to which it is party, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including religious groups, enjoy the rights recognized in these instruments” and requests “the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-third session.”

Decision 1996/287 of ECOSOC endorses the Commission's decision to extend for a further year the mandate of the Special Representative, and approves the Commission's request to the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-third session.

Resolution E/CN.4/Sub.2/RES/1996/7 (20.8.1996) of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities gravely concerned “at reports of: (a) Extensive and continuing human rights violations by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including arbitrary and summary executions, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, unexplained disappearances, the absence of guarantees essential for the protection of the right to a fair trial and disregard for freedom of expression and freedom of religion,” requests “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to investigate fully in order to end the alleged violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran which include: (d) Religious discrimination, notably against Bahá'ís and Christians,” urges “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to implement fully the conclusions and the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and to other minority religious

groups, including Christians, until they are completely emancipated” and requests “the Secretary-General to continue to keep the Sub-Commission informed of relevant reports and United Nations measures to prevent human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including violations of the religious freedoms of the Bahá’í and the Christian communities in Iran.”

Resolution 51/107 (12.12.96) of the General Assembly expresses “its concern at the grave breaches of human rights of the Bahá’ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran and situations of discrimination against the members of this religious community, as well as at the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs, including lack of adequate protection for the Christian minorities, some members of which have been the target of intimidation and assassination,” urges “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State party to the International Covenants on Human Rights, to abide by its freely undertaken obligations under the Covenants and under other international instruments on human rights and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including members of religious groups and persons belonging to minorities, enjoy all the rights enshrined in those instruments,” calls upon “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief relating to the Bahá’ís and to other minority religious groups, including Christians,” expresses its grave concern at indications, according to the information received by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, of a significant toughening of criminal legislation and its application in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in particular at the incidence of capital punishment imposed for apostasy and non-violent crimes, in violation of the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and United Nations safeguards,” and decides “on the basis of the report of the Special Representative and in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council, to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá’ís, during its fifty-second session under the item entitled ‘Human rights questions.’”

1997

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1997/54 (15.4.1997) of the Commission on Human Rights expresses “its concern: (b) At the grave breaches of the human rights of the Bahá’ís in the Islamic Republic of Iran and situ-

ations of discrimination against the members of this religious community, as well as at the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs, including certain Christian minorities, some members of which have been the targets of intimidation and assassination,” calls upon “the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran: (b) To abide by its freely undertaken obligations under the International Covenants on Human Rights and under other international instruments on human rights, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including members of religious groups and persons belonging to minorities, enjoy all the rights enshrined in those instruments; (c) To implement fully the recommendations of the Special Representative and the relevant recommendations of the Special Rapporteurs on religious intolerance and on freedom of opinion and expression, in particular the recommendations relating to the Bahá’ís, Christians, Sunni and other minority religious groups; (g) To ensure that capital punishment will not be imposed for apostasy or non-violent crimes, or in disregard of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations safeguards” and decides: “... (c) To continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá’ís, at its fifty-fourth session under the agenda item entitled ‘Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world, with particular reference to colonial and other dependent countries and territories.’”

Decision 1997/262 of ECOSOC endorses the Commission’s decision to extend for a further year the mandate of the Special Representative on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, approved the Commission’s request to the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and to report to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session, and to keep a gender perspective in mind when seeking and analysing information, and to request the Secretary-General to continue to give all necessary assistance to the Special Representative to enable him to discharge his mandate fully.

Resolution 52/142 of the General Assembly expresses “its concern: (b) At the grave breaches of the human rights of the Bahá’ís, the discrimination against members of other religious minorities, including Christians, and the death sentences pronounced against Dhabihullah Mahrami, Musa Talibi and Ramadan-Ali Dhulfaqari, on the charge of apostasy, and against Bihnam Mithaqi and Kayvan Khalajabadi because of their beliefs,” calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran: “... (b) To abide by its freely undertaken obligations under the International

Covenants on Human Rights and under other international instruments on human rights and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including members of religious groups and persons belonging to minorities, enjoy all the rights enshrined in those instruments; (c) To implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief relating to the Bahá'ís and to other minority religious groups, including Christians, until they are completely emancipated; E/CN.4/1996/95/Add.2. (g) To ensure that capital punishment will not be imposed for apostasy or non-violent crimes or in disregard of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and United Nations safeguards" and decides "to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, at its fifty-third session under the item entitled 'Human rights questions,' in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights."

1998

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1998/80 (22.4.1998) of the Commission on Human Rights expresses "its concern: (c) At continuing grave violations of the human rights of the Bahá'ís, as well as at the discrimination against members of other religious minorities, including Christians, despite constitutional guarantees, at the increased pressure on religious communities and persons suspected of proselytizing, and at the death sentences pronounced against Mr. Dhabihullah Mahrami and Mr. Musa Talibi on the charge of apostasy, and against Mr. Bihnam Mithaqi and Mr. Kayvan Khalajabadi because of their beliefs," calls upon "the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran: (b) To abide by its freely undertaken obligations under the International Covenants on Human Rights and under other international instruments on human rights, and to ensure that all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including members of religious groups and persons belonging to minorities, enjoy all the rights enshrined in those instruments; ... (e) To implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís, Christians and other minority religious groups, until they are completely emancipated ... (j) To ensure that capital punishment will not be imposed for non-violent crimes, for apostasy, or otherwise in disregard of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations safeguards" and decides: "... (c) To continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís and the Christians, at

its fifty-fifth session under the same agenda item."

Decision 1998/273 of ECOSOC endorses the Commission's decision to extend the mandate of the Special Representative for a further year, to request the Special Representative to submit an interim report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session and to report to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session, and to keep a gender perspective in mind when seeking and analysing information, and to request the Secretary-General to continue to give all necessary assistance to the Special Representative to enable him to discharge his mandate fully.

Resolution 53/158 (9.12.1998) of the General Assembly expresses "its concern at the discrimination against religious minorities and in particular remains gravely concerned at the unabated pattern of persecution against the Bahá'ís, in particular the execution and sentencing to death and arrests of members of the Bahá'í community, and calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and to other religious minorities, until they are completely emancipated"; calls upon "the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure that capital punishment will not be imposed for other than the most serious crimes, for apostasy, or otherwise in disregard of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and United Nations safeguards, and to provide the Special Representative with relevant statistics on this matter"; and decides "to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, at its fifty-fourth session under the item entitled 'Human rights questions,' in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights."

1999

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/1999/13 (23.4.1999) of the Commission on Human Rights notes with interest: "... (b) The reported elimination of discrimination against Bahá'í youth in enrollment in the pre-university year at the high-school level, while remaining concerned that their entry to universities continues to be refused, expresses its concern: (c) At the continued discrimination against religious minorities, in particular the unabated and, in some instances, worsened pattern of persecution against the Bahá'ís, including death sentences, executions, arrests and the closure of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education" and calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran: "... (b) To ensure that capital punishment will not be imposed for other than the most serious crimes, not for apostasy or otherwise in disregard of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and United Nations safeguards, and to provide

the Special Representative with relevant statistics on this matter; (c) To implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and other minority religious groups until they are completely emancipated"; and decides: "... (c) To continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of the Bahá'ís and other minority groups, at its fifty-sixth session under the same agenda item."

Resolution A/RES754/177 (17.12.1999) of the General Assembly expresses its concern... "at the discrimination against religious minorities, in particular Bahá'ís, and remains gravely concerned at the unabated pattern of persecution against the Bahá'ís, including death sentences, arrests and the closure of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, and calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and other religious minorities until they are completely emancipated"; Decides... "to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups, such as the Bahá'ís, at its fifty-fifth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions", in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights".

2000

Resolution E/CN.4/2000/L.16 (10.4.2000) the Commission on Human Rights expresses its concern: "... At the discrimination against religious minorities, in particular the unabated pattern of persecution against the Bahá'ís, including death sentences and arrests"; calls upon... "To ensure that capital punishment will not be imposed other than for the most serious crimes, not for apostasy or otherwise in disregard of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and United Nations safeguards, and to provide the Special Representative with relevant statistics on this matter"; "To implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and other minority religious groups until they are completely emancipated; Decides:..." "To continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, paying particular attention to further developments, including the situation of the Bahá'ís and other minority groups, at its fifty-seventh session under the same agenda item".

Resolution A/RES/55/114 (4.12.00) The General Assembly expresses its concern: "At the discrimination against persons belonging to religious minorities, in particular the unabated pattern of persecution of the Bahá'ís, including the continuing detention and

the sentencing to death of some of them". Calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran..." to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Representative with regard to religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and other minority religious groups, Ibid., para 110. until they are completely emancipated"; Decides "to continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the situation of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís, at its fifty-sixth session, under the item 'Human rights questions', in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights".

2001

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/2001/17 (20.4.2001) the Commission on Human Rights notes:

" recent positive steps regarding the situation of the Bahá'ís, including the report that they will be allowed to re-establish their cemetery in Tehran, but expresses its concern at the still-existing discrimination against persons belonging to minorities, in particular against Bahá'ís, and calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious grounds or against persons belonging to minorities and to address this matter in an open manner with the full participation of the minorities themselves, as well as to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance relating to the Bahá'ís and other minority groups until they are completely emancipated". Decides... "to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, paying particular attention to further developments, including the situation of the Bahá'ís and other minority groups, at its fifty-eighth session under the same agenda item".

Resolution A/RES/56/171(19.12.2001) The General Assembly expresses its concern: ... "At the continuing discrimination against persons belonging to minorities, in particular against Bahá'ís, Christians, Jews and Sunnis". It calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran: "... To eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious grounds or against persons belonging to minorities and to address this matter in an open manner, with the full participation of the minorities themselves, as well as to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of religious intolerances relating to the Bahá'ís and other minority groups until they are completely emancipated.". Decides : .."To continue the examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, paying particular attention to further developments, including the situation of the Bahá'ís and other minority groups, at its fifty-seventh

session, under the agenda item entitled “Human rights questions”, in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights”.

2003

Resolution A/RES/58/195 (22.12.03). The General Assembly expresses its serious concern at:..” The Continuing discrimination against persons belonging to minorities, including the Bahá’ís, Christians, Jews and Sunnis, including cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, the denial of free worship or of publicly carrying out communal affairs and the disregard of property rights”. It calls upon the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran:...” To eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious grounds or against persons belonging to minorities, including the Bahá’ís, Christians, Jews and Sunnis, and to address this matter in an open manner, with the full participation of the minorities themselves”. It decides:... “to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, paying particular attention to further developments, including the situation of the Bahá’ís and other minority groups, at its fifty-ninth session, under the item entitled “Human rights ques-

tions”, in the light of additional elements provided by the Commission on Human Rights”.

2004

Resolution A/RES/59/205 (02.11.04). The General Assembly expresses its serious concern at:..” The continuing discrimination against persons belonging to minorities, including Christians, Jews and Sunnis, and the increased discrimination against the Bahá’ís, including cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, the denial of free worship or of publicly carrying out communal affairs, the disregard of property rights, the destruction of sites of religious importance, the suspension of social, educational and community-related activities and the denial of access to higher education, employment, pensions and other benefits”. It calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran: ...” To eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious grounds or against persons belonging to minorities, including the Bahá’ís, Christians, Jews and Sunnis, and to address this matter in an open manner, with the full participation of the minorities themselves, and to ensure respect for the freedom of religion or belief of all persons”.

THE BAHÁ'Í QUESTION
Cultural Cleansing in Iran

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