



# Community Under Siege: The Ordeal of the Bahá'ís of Shiraz



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To raise local awareness of human rights violations and international human rights standards inside Iran;

To establish an online archive of human rights documents that can one day be used to develop and support a reckoning process in Iran.

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#### **Photographs:**

Front cover photograph is of the funeral of Mr. Vahdat, Mr. Khushkhu, and Mr. Mihdizadih who were executed in Shiraz on April 30, 1981. This photograph was provided by Ruhyyiyh Jahanpour Hiebert. The picture of Ayatollah Khomeini was taken from the Official Site of Holy Defiance, available at [www.sajed.ir](http://www.sajed.ir).

The photograph of Yadu'llah and Mona Mahmudnizhad on the back cover was provided by Jack Lenz.

Photographs used throughout the report were obtained from members of the international Bahá'í community, Ruhyyiyh Jahanpour Hiebert, and from the website, <http://www.info.bahai.org/>.

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Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, New Haven, Connecticut

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Iran Human Rights Documentation  
Center

September 2007



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## 1. Preface

The Bahá'í community in Iran has long faced repeated cycles of persecution. The Shi'a clerical establishment in Iran has condemned the Bahá'í Faith as a heretical deviation from Islam; as the hometown of the Báb and one of the early centers of the Bahá'í Faith, the city of Shiraz in Fars Province has been a frequent flashpoint for these tensions.

The arrests that took place in Shiraz in 1982, and the subsequent announcement of the execution of twenty-two Bahá'í faithful the following year, are emblematic of the Bahá'í experience in the Islamic Republic. The oldest victim, Mr. Abdu'l-Husayn Azadi, was sixty-six years old and the youngest, Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad, only seventeen years old. They found themselves pitted against the full weight of the Iranian state simply because of their religious beliefs.

The IHRDC report *A Faith Denied: The Persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran* exposed the effective criminalization of the Bahá'í religion by the Islamic Republic; events in Shiraz provide a graphic illustration of how this narrative worked in practice. The head of the Revolutionary Court in Shiraz, Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, denounced the Shiraz twenty-two prior to their execution as "puppets of Satan and the superpowers and their agents such as the Universal House of Justice of Israel." Their interrogators repeatedly accused the prisoners of nebulous acts of espionage for which they offered no proof. Ultimately, the Iranian regime would fall back on charges of espionage to justify the executions.

Religious persecution was the primary motive for the Shiraz arrests and murders. In custody the Bahá'í detainees were classified as 'unclean' by the prison authorities and forbidden physical contact with the general prison population, a prohibition which extended to their personal belongings. They were forbidden to worship openly or talk about their faith. Community leaders were singled out for torture. All the prisoners were placed under great pressure to recant their faith.

It would be tempting to dismiss events in Shiraz as a local aberration if it were not for the personal intervention of Ayatollah Khomeini in the case. As an international chorus of protest grew in volume, Ayatollah Khomeini dismissed pleas for clemency in a widely published speech casting the Bahá'ís as a political party rather than as a religion and the prisoners in Shiraz as nothing more than spies. The majority of the Shiraz victims were executed less than a month later.

The story of the Shiraz executions is one of religious devotion in the face of extraordinary pressure to convert. To this day, the government of Iran continues to refuse to recognize the Bahá'í Faith as a genuine religion and to extend Bahá'ís the same rights accorded to Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians in the Iranian constitution. It is our profound hope that this report will bring attention to the historic and ongoing oppression of a minority religious group in Iran and give the current regime in Tehran cause for reflection.

## 2. Executive Summary

The 1983 execution of twenty-two members of the local Bahá'í community in Shiraz is the single greatest episode of overt violence against Iranian Bahá'ís, but it is not anomalous. The case epitomizes many aspects of the Islamic Republic's treatment of this domestic religious minority, including the refusal to accord the Bahá'í Faith the status of a religion while simultaneously pursuing the conversion of the Bahá'í faithful in a manner reminiscent of the methods of the Spanish Inquisition.

- As an early center of the Bahá'í Faith, Shiraz has repeatedly been the scene of conflict between the Muslim majority and the local Bahá'í community. During the Iranian revolution Bahá'í property was seized for use by the revolutionary authorities and the local Bahá'í cemetery desecrated. In February 1979 the suburb of Sa'diyeh was rocked by an anti-Bahá'í pogrom that left more than two hundred homes and businesses looted and burned.
- In April 1979, the Revolutionary Guards in Shiraz confiscated one of the holiest Bahá'í sites, the House of the Báb, and in September 1979 the property was completely razed to the ground. In 1981 the site was transformed into a road and public square which in turn gave way to the construction of a new mosque dedicated to the 12th Imam on the site.
- The new Islamic government also targeted individual members of the Bahá'í community in Shiraz. Five leading members of the community were executed in the first half of 1981. Three more were killed in 1982. In the autumn of 1982 local Revolutionary Guards conducted two rounds of mass arrests that further targeted the Bahá'í community. In October thirty-nine local Bahá'ís were detained. A second round of arrests in November swept up another forty-one local Bahá'ís.
- Although some detainees were released, others endured months of harsh interrogation at the hands of the Revolutionary Guards. The interrogators sought information about the Bahá'í community; they also sought to coerce the detainees into recanting their faith. In the case of the more prominent detainees this coercion included torture.
- In February 1983, the Revolutionary Court in Shiraz accidentally sent an internal circular intended for distribution within the Revolutionary Guard Corps to the offices of a local newspaper, Khabar-i Junub. The circular stated that the Court had issued an order for the execution of twenty-two members of the local Bahá'í community. The victims were not named. The newspaper published this information following it up with an interview with the Head of the Revolutionary Court, Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, ominously headlined: "I Warn the Bahá'ís to come to the Bosom of Islam." At the time one detainee had already been executed in January. Three more prominent Bahá'í detainees were executed in March 1983.
- The Khabar-i Junub article provoked an international outcry. The Islamic Republic regime responded by exploiting the foreign pressure as evidence to support its narrative that the Bahá'í Faith was the artificial creation of the superpowers with the aim of undermining Iranian society. In a widely reported speech in May 1983 Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, dismissed international protests with the comment: "Were these people not spies, you would not be raising your voices."

- At the beginning of June 1983, in accordance with Islamic tradition, the remaining Bahá'í detainees were offered four last opportunities to convert to Islam and save their lives. They all declined. Six male detainees were executed on June 16. Ten female detainees were hanged in Shiraz's Chawgun Square on June 18. Of the two remaining male detainees who died in 1983, one was executed at the end of June and the other died while in prison custody.
- Although the Iranian authorities have never explicitly named the Shiraz twenty-two, the IHRDC has identified twenty-two Bahá'í detainees who died in 1983 in the custody of the Shiraz authorities. Twenty-one were executed and one victim died in prison after months of abuse. We believe that it is reasonable to conclude from the existing evidence that it was the original intention of the Shiraz Revolutionary Court that all twenty-two be executed for their refusal to recant their faith.

### 3. Political Context

The Shi'a clerical establishment in Iran has for decades attempted to repress the Bahá'í Faith, which it views as a heretical deviation from Islam but which the rest of the world recognizes as a distinct religious tradition. Senior Iranian civil, military, and religious leaders endorsed anti-Bahá'í campaigns in the 1950s. These organized campaigns resulted in acts of mob violence and the destruction of Bahá'í religious sites in Iran. After the consolidation of clerical rule following the 1979 revolution, the government itself directed a centralized anti-Bahá'í campaign enforced by the newly formed institutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). IRI authorities publicly attempted to justify the systematic persecution of Bahá'ís by portraying the community as a criminal political faction engaged in espionage and anti-revolutionary offenses. However, the authorities' repeated assertions that Bahá'ís who recanted their faith and converted to Islam would have their rights restored, attests to the fact that these individuals were in fact being targeted solely for their religious affiliation.

#### 3.1. Effective criminalization of the Bahá'í Faith

Article 13 of the new Islamic Republic constitution explicitly withheld recognition from the Bahá'í minority, emphasizing that “Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies.” Furthermore, Article 14 of the new constitution established a framework that would repeatedly be used to justify persecution against the Bahá'ís by the IRI. Article 14 stipulated that non-Muslims deemed to be conspiring against Islam or the Islamic Republic would be denied the constitutional protections extended to minority groups. As IRI officials issued public statements identifying Bahá'ís as a “misguided group... whose affiliation with world Zionism is a clear fact” and who could not be “in the same category as minorities like the Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians,”<sup>1</sup> it became increasingly evident that the new legal provisions had effectively criminalized the Bahá'í Faith.

The exclusion of the Bahá'í minority from the constitution and the accompanying denial of protection to Bahá'ís under the law had important ramifications. The refusal to accord legal recognition to Bahá'í marriages meant that Iranian Bahá'ís lost inheritance rights and faced obstacles in obtaining identity papers; Bahá'ís could be dismissed from education or employment on the basis of their religion.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, they were denied basic freedoms of expression and assembly as a religious community, and hence were deprived of their right to worship openly or in private.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Buenos Aires, September 26, 1979, cited in DOUGLAS MARTIN, *THE PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN 1844-1944* (Bahá'í Studies, Vol. 12/13, 1984) at 43.

<sup>2</sup> BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, *THE BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN: A REPORT ON THE PERSECUTION OF A RELIGIOUS MINORITY 26-27* (1981) [hereinafter “BIC REPORT ON THE PERSECUTION OF A RELIGIOUS MINORITY”]. For examples of educational and employment-related dismissal letters, see generally IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION CENTER, *A FAITH DENIED: THE PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF IRAN* (December 2006) at 42-46 [hereinafter “IHRDC, A FAITH DENIED”].

<sup>3</sup> See BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, *THE BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN: A REPORT ON THE PERSECUTION OF A RELIGIOUS MINORITY 26-27* (1981). For discussion of anti-Bahá'í sentiment in the constitutional drafting proceedings in 1979, see ELIZ SANASARIAN, *RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN IRAN 64* (2000), citing to comment in Qa'emi in *Surat-i Mashruh-i Mozakirat-i Majlis-i Barrasiyyih Nahaiyyih Qanun-i Asasiyyih Jomhuriyyih Islami-yih Iran* [The Complete Proceedings of the Assembly for the Final Revision of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran], 26th session, 31/6/1358 (September 22, 1979) at 669; and 28th session, 1/7/1358 (September 23, 1979) at 722 (noting that “in another discussion over the issue of freedom of the press, a deputy commented that, if the press was allowed to operate freely, ‘the stray Bahá'í sect’ through their publications would ‘seduce’ the people.”)

### 3.2. Torture, execution and forced disappearances

The first years of the Islamic Republic witnessed the full range of state coercive force deployed against the Bahá'ís. The IRI authorities systematically targeted the Bahá'í leadership - particularly members of administrative bodies such as the National Spiritual Assembly and Local Spiritual Assemblies - in an attempt to destroy the community.<sup>4</sup> Local Shi'a clerics, through newly established institutions of the Islamic Republic such as the *Komitehs*, Revolutionary Courts, and Revolutionary Guards, began to target the Bahá'ís living in their communities.<sup>5</sup> The Revolutionary Guards,<sup>6</sup> a paramilitary group that had seized control of police and internal security functions, were used to conduct interrogations and arrests, confiscate property, expel Bahá'ís from private and public institutions and even execute the Leading members of the Bahá'í community.<sup>7</sup> By 1986, over half of the Bahá'ís executed by the IRI had held a community leadership position at the time of their deaths,<sup>8</sup> and the members of three successive Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies formed in Tehran, and most of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in cities across Iran, had been executed or forcibly disappeared.<sup>9</sup> Senior IRI officials, such as Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani<sup>10</sup> and Head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Ardebili,<sup>11</sup> acknowledged these arrests and executions, which were frequently justified by charges of espionage or treason.<sup>12</sup> In addition, IHRDC has gathered accounts of 183 executions of Bahá'ís in non-leadership positions between May 1980 and November 1985.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.3. Destruction of property and desecration of religious sites

Another element of the Islamic Republic's anti-Bahá'í campaigns, has been the systematic seizure and destruction of Bahá'í property.<sup>14</sup> A number of Bahá'í holy sites were seized, desecrated, and/or demolished after the revolution.<sup>15</sup> Attacks on Bahá'í community property included the confiscation and destruction of Bahá'í community centers across Iran, as well as the desecration and closure of Bahá'í cemeteries and arrests of cemetery employees.<sup>16</sup> Bahá'í-financed community schools and hospitals were

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<sup>4</sup> See generally IHRDC, A FAITH DENIED, *supra* note 2, at 23-35. For more information on Bahá'í administrative structures, see, e.g., website of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States at <http://www.bahai.us/bahai-administration> (accessed October 7, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> *Komitehs*, or revolutionary committees, were Islamic groups organized around mosques in communities around the country.

<sup>6</sup> In Persian, *Sepah-i Pasdaran-i Inqilab-i Islami*, colloquially known as *Sepah-i Pasdaran*.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Statement made by the Bahá'í International Community to the UN Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 34<sup>th</sup> Session, August 28, 1981; October 17, 2006 Statement of Farideh Samimi (on file with IHRDC) (describing role of Revolutionary Guards in the arrest of members of the Second Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly of Iran).

<sup>8</sup> BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN 1979-1986: A 7-YEAR CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE A RELIGIOUS MINORITY, at 3 (1986).

<sup>9</sup> JOHN SIMPSON AND TIRA SHUBART, LIFTING THE VEIL 224 (1995).

<sup>10</sup> Bahá'í International Community, *Statement to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances* (January 31, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> *Téhéran dément l'exécution de huit responsables Bahá'ís* [Tehran denies the execution of eight Bahá'í leaders], LE MONDE, January 5, 1982 at 6; *Téhéran confirme – après l'avoir démentie – la mise a mort de huit responsables Bahá'ís* [Tehran confirms – after having denied – the execution of eight Bahá'í leaders], LE MONDE, January 8, 1982.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Bill of Indictment for Buzurg Alaviyan, dated April 5, 1981, on file with IHRDC; THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD (Vol. XVIII, 1979-1983) at 279; Statement Prepared by Yadu'llah Lutfi, the defense attorney representing the Bahá'í accused persons (on file with IHRDC); EZZATOLLAH DIAZAYERI (NSA OF SWEDEN), STRANGERS IN THEIR NATIVE LAND 70 (1987)(citing SOBHI AZADIGAN, July 1980, no. 151) [hereinafter "STRANGERS IN THEIR NATIVE LAND"].

<sup>13</sup> See generally IHRDC, A FAITH DENIED, *supra* note 2, at 13.

<sup>14</sup> See generally *id.* at 40-41; see also Bahá'í International Community, *Recent attacks on the lives and properties of Bahá'ís in Iran, 25 September-3 November 1978* (1978).

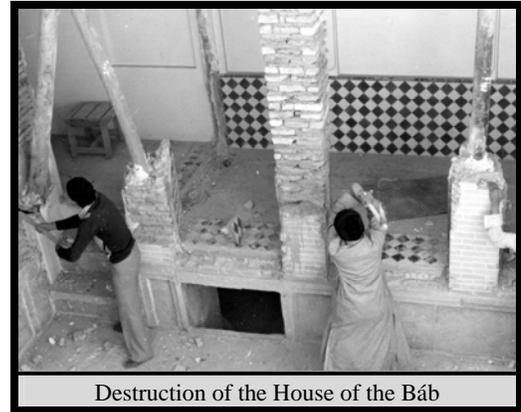
<sup>15</sup> See generally IHRDC, A FAITH DENIED, *supra* note 2, at 36-38; see also Statement by Kurush Tala'i regarding the House of the Báb in Shiraz (October 2, 1979) at 1 (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>16</sup> See generally IHRDC, A FAITH DENIED, *supra* note 2, at 38-39; see also Map of Cemeteries (April-May 1979) in National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, *Attacks on the Baha'is of Iran* (September 9, 1979); *Major Developments During December 1981/January 1982* (January 19, 1982) at 1, Bahá'í International Community; *Namiyyih Doctor Manuchihr-i Hakim*

also confiscated and closed.<sup>17</sup> For example, the Bahá'í-owned Mithaqiyyih Hospital in Tehran was designated “anti-Islamic and anti-revolutionary” by a local *Komiteh* in 1979 and subsequently confiscated by order of the Central Revolutionary Court.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.4. Economic and social discrimination

The post-revolutionary period also saw acute economic and social discrimination directed against individual Bahá'ís, including bars to employment and the enforcement of rules preventing Bahá'ís from owning or inheriting property. In the early 1980s, IRI authorities regularly seized the assets of executed Bahá'ís and their family members.<sup>19</sup> There were also numerous reported incidents of looting, vandalism and arson attacks on private property owned by Bahá'ís.<sup>20</sup> Many Bahá'ís faced the loss of their jobs after the central government distributed circulars throughout Iran shortly after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, instructing that Bahá'ís were to be removed from civil service positions.<sup>21</sup>



Dismissal notices issued to Bahá'ís routinely made the religious basis for their job loss explicit; notices included language emphasizing that “if [they] express regret and remorse about [their] affiliation with the wayward sect [of Bahá'ís], and seek refuge in the rejuvenating bosom of Islam, [their] penitence will be accepted and [they] will be hired to work and [their] withheld wages will be paid.”<sup>22</sup> “Purging committees” set up to implement the Cultural Revolution took on the task of reviewing employment files to identify and dismiss those deemed unsuitable, including many Bahá'ís.<sup>23</sup> By 1987, over 11,000 Bahá'í government employees had lost their jobs as a result.<sup>24</sup> Bahá'í students were also targeted in the purge of

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*Darbariyyih Bimaristan-i Mithaqiyyih* [Letter from Professor Manuchihr Hakim regarding confiscation of Bahá'í hospital], dated 26/4/1358 (July 17, 1979) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, *Attacks on the Bahá'ís of Iran* (September 9, 1979) at 5 (noting the confiscation of the following properties: the Institution of Higher Education, Summer School (Hadiqih), youth recreation grounds in Shiraz and Tehran, and School of Hushangi in Yazd).

<sup>18</sup> *Namiyyih Doctor Manuchihr-i Hakim Darbariyyih Bimaristan-i Mithaqiyyih* [Letter from Professor Manuchihr Hakim regarding confiscation of Bahá'í hospital], dated 26/4/1358 (July 17, 1979) (on file with IHRDC); Copy of Warrant dated June 13, 1979, reproduced in: National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany, *Die Bahá'í im Iran: Dokumentation der Verfolgung einer religiösen Minderheit* [The Bahá'ís in Iran: Documentation of the Pursuit of a Religious Minority] 131 (1985). See also *Ra'yih Dadgah-i Inqilab Darbariyyih Mo'assisin-i Bimaristan-ih Mithaqiyyih* [Excerpts from the verdict of the Central Revolutionary Court ordering the confiscation of the Bahá'í Hospital (Mithaqiyyih Hospital) in Tehran], reprinted in BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THE BAHÁ'Í S OF IRAN: A REPORT ON THE PERSECUTION OF A RELIGIOUS MINORITY 80 (1982).

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Bahá'í International Community, *The persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran -- Major Developments During December 1981/January 1982* (January 19, 1982) at 2.

<sup>20</sup> Bahá'í International Community, *Recent attacks on the lives and properties of Bahá'ís in Iran, 25 September-3 November 1978* (1978) at 9.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., *Namiyyih Ni'mat'ullah Taqa bih Karmand-i Bahá'í* [Letter of expulsion from Ni'matollah Taqa, Governor of Fars Province] (date not legible) (on file with IHRDC); *Namiyyih Hasan Mu'tamid Riza'i az Idariyyih Kar va Umur-i Ijtima'i Darbariyyih Bahá'íyan* [Letter of dismissal from Hasan Mu'tamid Riza'i, Deputy Supervisor of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs], dated 16/9/1360 (December 7, 1981) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>22</sup> See *Namiyyih Ni'mat'ullah Taqa bih Karmand-i Bahá'í* [Letter of expulsion from Ni'matullah Taqa, Governor of Fars Province] (date not legible) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>23</sup> *Ra'is-i Jahad-i Danishgahi az Shurayih A'liyyih Inqilab-i Farhangi Miguyad; Paksazi Nabud, Tasfiyyih Bud* [The Head of the University Jihad Committee Talks About the Supreme Counsel of the Cultural Revolution; “It Was Not Cleansing, It Was Filtering.”], SHARGH (online), 21/10/1384 (January 11, 2006), available at:

<http://sharghnewspaper.com/841013/html/societ.htm#s351291> (accessed November 1, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Fergus M. Bordewich, *Holy terror: Moslem zealots wage a deadly war against Bahá'í heresies*, THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY Vol. 259, at 26(5), April 1987.

the education system; schools across Iran issued blanket statements prohibiting the enrollment of Bahá'í students,<sup>25</sup> and the Ministry of Education formalized the prohibition against Bahá'ís in the university system by issuing a decree in September 1981 identifying membership of the Bahá'í Faith as a crime and banning Bahá'í students or professors from universities.<sup>26</sup>

The official attitude of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards its Bahá'í population is perfectly encapsulated in a leaked 1991 memo written by Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi Golpaygani, Secretary of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, outlining a set of government policy guidelines for dealing with “The Bahá'í Question.”<sup>27</sup> This confidential memo recommends that the government deal with Bahá'ís “in such a way that their progress and development are blocked”, and recommends that individuals who identify themselves as Bahá'í be denied employment as well as “any position of influence, such as in the educational sector.”<sup>28</sup> The memo further urges that “a plan must be devised to confront and destroy their cultural roots outside the country.”<sup>29</sup>

### 3.5. Recent Developments

Since the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as President of Iran in June 2005, this policy of oppression persists, and recent events suggest that a new cycle of repression may be underway. Several documents have recently emerged demonstrating the IRI's commitment to the continued surveillance and monitoring of the Bahá'í community.

A leaked October 2005 memo from the Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces stated that, following instructions from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, the Command Headquarters had been tasked with “acquir[ing] a comprehensive and complete report of all the activities of these sects (including political, economic, social and cultural) for the purpose of identifying all the individuals [who belong to] these misguided sects.”<sup>30</sup> The memo further requests that the relevant authorities “collect any and all information about the above mentioned activities of these individuals, in a highly confidential manner, and report it to this Command Headquarters.”<sup>31</sup> An August 2006 letter from the Ministry of Interior notes that “[the Bahá'í] sect is illegal and... exploited by international and Zionist organizations against the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran” and requests provincial offices around the country to “order the relevant offices to cautiously and carefully monitor and manage their [the Bahá'ís'] social activities.”<sup>32</sup>

In addition, the IRI government continues periodically to arrest members of the Bahá'í community. Often those arrested have been subjected to interrogation and released after a few days. At least 125 such arrests

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<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., *Namih bih Awliyayih Danish Amuzan Az Dabiristan-i Pishahang* [Instructions to the Parents from the Pishahang high school] (regarding the qualifications required of students, one of which was belief in one of Iran's recognized religions, excluding Bahá'ís), dated 15/4/1358 (July 6, 1979) (on file with the IHRDC).

<sup>26</sup> BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, *THE BAHÁ'Í S OF IRAN: A REPORT ON THE PERSECUTION OF A RELIGIOUS MINORITY* 17 (1982).

<sup>27</sup> *Namiyyih Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi Golpaygani, Dabir-i Shurayih Aliyyih Inqilab-i Farhangi* [Memorandum by Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hashemi Golpaygani, Secretary of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, dated 6/12/1369 (February 25, 1991)] [hereinafter “Golpaygani Memo”]. IRI officials claimed the document was a forgery.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> *Namiyyih Sitad-i Kulli Niruhayih Musalah-i Farmandihyiyih Kulli Quva Darbariyiyih “Shinasa'iyyih Afradih Firqihayiyih Zalliyiyih Bahá'íyat va Bábiyat”*, [Letter from the Main Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Office of the Commander in Chief to multiple recipients regarding “Identification of Individuals of the Misguided Sects of Bahá'í and Bábi’], dated 7/8/1384 (October 29, 2005) (on file with IHRDC) [hereinafter “2005 Letter from Main Headquarters of the Armed Forces”].

<sup>31</sup> 2005 Letter from Main Headquarters of the Armed Forces, *supra* note 30.

<sup>32</sup> *Namiyyih Vizaratih Kishvar bih Mu'avininih Siyasi-Amniyatiyyih Ustandarihayih Sarasar-i Kishvar* [Letter from the Ministry of Interior to Political-Security Deputies of the provincial offices of the country], dated 28/5/1385 (August 19, 2006) (on file with IHRDC).

have been reported since the beginning of 2005.<sup>33</sup> 2007 brought reports of harassment, dismissals, and physical violence carried out by school authorities against Bahá'í schoolchildren.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.6. The religious significance of Shiraz

As the birthplace of the Bábí faith and the Bahá'í movement, the city of Shiraz is considered a crucial spiritual center of the Bahá'í community. The Báb, the founder of the Bábí movement which is the forerunner of the Bahá'í Faith, was born in Shiraz. His home, preserved for over a hundred years, served as a place of pilgrimage and attracted spiritually devout Bahá'ís. Islamic clerics viewed the house of the Báb as a symbol of the Bahá'í presence in Iran and targeted its destruction as an important step towards the collapse of the Bahá'í community.<sup>35</sup>

Even before the revolution, Shiraz was a particular flashpoint for violence against the Bahá'í community. Local Bahá'ís were the object of hostility and, on occasion, violence stirred up by Shi'a clerics and the anti-Bahá'í organization known as the Hojjatiyeh Society. These tensions were exacerbated by the revolutionary fervor of 1978-79. In December 1978, the modern Shiraz suburb of Sa'diyeh was swept by an anti-Bahá'í pogrom in which Bahá'í homes and businesses were attacked, looted, or burnt.<sup>36</sup> By January 1979, at least 165 Bahá'í homes throughout Shiraz had been attacked, of which 154 had been looted and/or burnt and 11 destroyed.<sup>37</sup>

Only two months after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the newly founded Revolutionary Guards confiscated the House of the Báb.<sup>38</sup> Although the Bahá'í community tried to secure its recovery, the revolutionary authorities ultimately razed the House of the Báb to the ground in September 1979.<sup>39</sup>

In 1980 the Bahá'í Center in Shiraz was confiscated by the new Committee for the Islamic Revolution.<sup>40</sup> The authorities placed a sign outside announcing that it was now the office of Ayatollah Mahallati, the same religious leader who is believed to have orchestrated the destruction of the House of the Báb.<sup>41</sup> The

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<sup>33</sup> Bahá'í International Community, *Fifty-four Bahá'ís arrested in Iran* (May 24, 2006), available at: <http://www.Bahá'í.org/persecution/newsreleases/24-05-06> (accessed October 18, 2006); Human Rights Watch, *Iran: Scores Arrested in Anti-Bahá'í Campaign* (June 6, 2006), available at: <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/06/05/iran13515.htm> (accessed October 23, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Bahá'í World News Service, *Bahá'í Schoolchildren in Iran Increasingly Harassed and Abused by School Authorities*, April 4, 2007, available online at <http://news.bahai.org/story.cfm?storyid=515> (accessed August 3, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., Statement by Kurush Tala'i regarding the House of the Báb in Shiraz (October 2, 1979); Statement of Ruhyyih (Ruhi) Jahanpour Hiebert (dated May 17, 2007) (on file with IHRDC) at 1 [hereinafter "Jahanpour Statement"] at 3 (describing how, even after the destruction of the House of the Báb, the authorities made repeated efforts to obtain the artifacts that had been kept there.) The authorities informed the Bahá'ís that if these artifacts were turned in, the arrested Assembly members would be released, so the Bahá'ís gathered up a number of these items and turned them into the authorities. However, the arrested Bahá'ís were not released.

<sup>36</sup> OLYA'S STORY: A SURVIVOR'S DRAMATIC ACCOUNT OF THE PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS IN REVOLUTIONARY IRAN 12 (1993) [hereinafter "OLYA'S STORY"]; ELIAS ZOHOORI, NAMES AND NUMBERS: A BAHÁ'I HISTORY REFERENCE GUIDE (University Printers, 2d ed. 1994) at 204-205 [hereinafter "NAMES AND NUMBERS"].

<sup>37</sup> Bahá'í International Community, Chronological Summary of Individual Acts of Persecution Against Bahá'ís in Iran (November 1981) at 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Namiyyih Sepah-i Pasdaran-i Inqilab-i Islamiyyih Fars Darbariyyih Khaniyyih Seyyed Báb* [Notice of Confiscation of the House of the Báb by the Sepah-i Pasdaran in Shiraz], 6/2/1358 (April 26, 1979) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>39</sup> IHRDC, A FAITH DENIED, *supra* note 2, at 37. When several people appealed to a senior cleric in Shiraz, Ayatollah Mahallati, to prevent the destruction of the building, he replied, "yes, that is the House of Heresy. It has been so for 130 years and should be demolished... these people (Bahá'ís) should either become Muslim, or it will not be a problem if their homes are destroyed. That House of Heresy (House of the Báb) should also be destroyed. Statement by Kurush Tala'i regarding the House of the Báb in Shiraz (October 2, 1979) (on file with IHRDC) at 10.

<sup>40</sup> In Persian, *Kumitiyyih Inqilab-i Islami*.

<sup>41</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 1. See also Statement by Kurush Tala'i regarding the House of the Báb in Shiraz (October 2, 1979) (on file with IHRDC) at 10.

local Bahá'í cemetery was desecrated and the land seized by government officials in this same period.<sup>42</sup>

The central government in Tehran ensured that Shiraz was one of the first cities in Iran to target individual Bahá'ís after the Revolution for arrest, execution, and surveillance.<sup>43</sup> On December 14, 1979 Azamatu'llah Fahandizh was executed.<sup>44</sup> In early 1980, the central government in Tehran sent orders to officials in Shiraz to arrest all nine members of the Local Spiritual Assembly and Mr. Yadu'llah Vahdat, a member of the regional Auxiliary Board.<sup>45</sup> On June 3, 1980 five Revolutionary Guards stormed the offices of the Local Spiritual Assembly and arrested four local Bahá'ís as well as the secretary of the community.<sup>46</sup>

The Revolutionary Guards began their hunt for the remaining individuals on Tehran's list, going first to the home of Yadu'llah Vahdat and arresting both him and his wife. Next Inayat Ihsaniyan was arrested at his place of work.<sup>47</sup> One of the Assembly members who was later released identified two of his interrogators - Shumali and Hamidi - as members of the Hojjiyeh Society.<sup>48</sup> In May 1981 the newspaper *Khabar-i Junub* published an article accusing Yadu'llah Vahdat, Sattar Khushkhu, and Ihsan Mihdizadih of being spies for "International Zionism" and announcing that they had been executed by a firing squad.<sup>49</sup>

Following attempts by the Bahá'í community to publicize events in Shiraz and elsewhere, the Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations sent a *Note Verbale* to the UN Secretary-General on September 14, 1981. The *Note* cited Article 13 of the Islamic Republic's Constitution, the holy Koran, and statements by President of the Supreme Court, Ayatollah Mousavi Ardebili, and Iran's Prime Minister, to support the Republic's contention that those Bahá'ís who had been executed had been involved in espionage and had been punished in accordance with Iranian law. However, the government offered no evidence to support the substantive charge of espionage.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See *Map of cemeteries destroyed* (April-May 1979) in National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom, *Attacks on the Bahá'ís of Iran* (September 9, 1979). Part of the desecrated Bahá'í cemetery was set aside for executed political opponents of the regime, who were refused burial in the Muslim cemetery and categorized as "infidels". See NAMES AND NUMBERS, *supra* note 36, at 219.

<sup>43</sup> Telephone Interview with E. Naderi, conducted by IHRDC (June 28, 2007) [hereinafter "Interview with E. Naderi"]. See also Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 1.

<sup>44</sup> BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, *THE BAHÁ'Í QUESTION: CULTURAL CLEANSING IN IRAN* 79 (2005).

<sup>45</sup> Interview with E. Naderi, *supra* note 43 (recounting that Mr. Asadi, a classmate and friend of E. Naderi, was the head of Komiteh and informed Mr. Naderi that this arrest order had been issued.) See also Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 1.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with E. Naderi, *supra* note 43. See also Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 1. The five individuals arrested at the LSA office that day were Mr. Sattar Khushkhu, Ihsanu'llah (Ihsan) Mihdizadih, Atta'u'llah Haqiqi, Mr. Farnush Hisami, and Mr. Ja'far Sha'irzadih.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with E. Naderi, *supra* note 43. IHRDC has acquired a complete list of those arrested in these incidents, but is not publishing the entire list at this time in light of safety concerns.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with E. Naderi, *supra* note 43. Mr. Naderi recounted that he recognized these two interrogators, whom he had met on previous occasions and who were known to be members of the *Tabliqat-i Islami* (or Hojjiyeh society). The Hojjiyeh society, a fundamentalist Islamic organization devoted to combating the Bahá'í Faith, is said to be affiliated and at times considered synonymous with the *Anjuman-i Tablighat-i Islami* (Islamic Propaganda Society); see MICHAEL RUBIN, *INTO THE SHADOWS: RADICAL VIGILANTES IN KHATAMI'S IRAN* 14 (2001).

<sup>49</sup> See *3 Nafar dar Shiraz Tirbaran Shudand* [Three People were Executed by a Firing Squad in Shiraz], *KHABAR-I JUNUB*, No. 337, 12/2/1360 (May 2, 1981) (on file with IHRDC). Mehdi Anvari and Hidayatu'llah Dihqani, two members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Abadih (a town near Shiraz) had also been arrested, and on March 16, 1981, they were executed. See Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 3; see also Witness Statement of Minoo Anvari (dated July 13, 2007) (on file with IHRDC) [hereinafter "Anvari Statement"] at 1. A newspaper article reported that Mr. Anvari had been charged with membership in a Bahá'í administrative body, being a "poet and admirer of the doomed Shah and his cursed father's court", collaboration with SAVAK and with a Zionist espionage center in Israel, among other crimes. Mr. Dihqani was accused of being a "very active member of the Bahá'í assembly of Abadih", converting Muslims to the Bahá'í Faith, "corrupting ignorant people, especially peasants," and espionage. See *Bih Hukm-i Dadgah-i Inqilab-i Islamiyyih Shiraz; Du Nafar bih Jurm-i Hamkari ba Sihyunism-i Jahani Dastgir Shudand* [According to the Verdict of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Shiraz: Two People Were Arrested for the Crime of Collaboration with International Zionism], *JOMHOURI ESLAMI*, 27/12/1360 (March 18, 1981) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>50</sup> See *STRANGERS IN THEIR NATIVE LAND*, *supra* note 12, at 87-88.

## 4. The Shiraz Twenty-Two

The Bahá'í community of Shiraz suffered its heaviest blow in a series of mass arrests in October and November 1982, which eventually culminated in the deaths of twenty-two local Bahá'ís the following year. Twenty-one victims were executed. One, Mr. Ahmad Ali Thabit-Sarvistani, died in detention after months of abuse. The Shiraz Revolutionary Court accidentally released an execution warrant to a local newspaper in February 1983, which stated that twenty-two local Bahá'ís had been sentenced to death. It is possible that Mr. Sarvistani would have ultimately also been executed had he survived long enough.

Nearly all of the twenty-two victims were first detained during the mass arrests of October and November 1982. Some were prominent members of the Bahá'í community, others were simply outspoken in defense of their faith. The oldest victim, Mr. Abdu'l-Husayn Azadi, was sixty-six years old and the youngest, Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad, had just turned seventeen at the time of her arrest. The victims were not executed *en masse*. Four of the victims were hanged between January and March of 1983. Sixteen were hanged in two groups on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 1983. The first group executed were all men, the second group all women. A final Bahá'í detainee, Mr. Suhayl Hushmand, was executed at the end of June.

The Shiraz death sentences received worldwide attention. This was the largest Bahá'í group to be condemned to death by Iran at one stroke. After the local newspaper reported the execution warrant, media interviews with the Religious Magistrate in charge of the proceedings made it clear that the condemned were being targeted because of their religious faith. For example, it emerged that the sixteen charges against Simin Sabiri included the crime of teaching moral education classes for children as well as being single and unmarried.<sup>51</sup> It appears that the other young women faced similar charges. As the international outcry grew in strength some of the highest officials in the IRI publicly endorsed the actions of the Shiraz Revolutionary Court, including Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei.

Such events were not unique to Shiraz. The execution of the Shiraz twenty-two stands out as a powerful example of the widespread and systematic persecution of the Iranian Bahá'í community by the authorities of the Islamic Republic. Members of the Bahá'í Faith were periodically arrested, tortured and executed elsewhere in Iran in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, as detailed in the IHRDC report *A Faith Denied: The Persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran*. Because the case of the Shiraz twenty-two illustrates the methods and motives of the Iranian authorities with unusual clarity, it merits particularly close inspection. This is the first comprehensive, independent report produced about the incident.

### 4.1. The October arrests

On October 23, 1982, Revolutionary Guards raided several Bahá'í homes in Shiraz and arrested thirty-eight members of the local Bahá'í community.<sup>52</sup> The arrests started early in the afternoon and went on well into the night. Eight of those arrested would ultimately be executed in June 1983: Ms. Simin Sabiri, Ms. Zarrin Muqimi, Ms. Akhtar Thabit, Mr. Yadu'llah and Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad, Mrs. Nusrat Yalda'i, Dr. Bahram Afnan, Mr. Jamshid Siyavushi, Mrs. Tuba Za'irpur and Mr. Bahram Yalda'i. Survivors of this group, Mr. Parviz Goharriz and Mr. Habibu'llah Hakimi, subsequently recorded their experiences, which have been used in the compilation of this report.

The arrest operation had clearly been well planned in advance. In almost every case the Revolutionary Guards arrived at their target's home in groups of four to five. They searched each domicile for artifacts, books, tapes, records, or anything else that would associate the individual with being an active member of

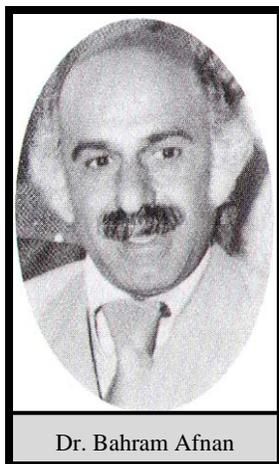
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<sup>51</sup> See Written account of Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Simin Sabiri (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>52</sup> Letter from a local Bahá'í in Shiraz (providing list of Bahá'ís who were arrested in October and November) (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC).

the Bahá'í community. They seemed particularly interested in anything that might identify the names and addresses of other members of the Bahá'í community.<sup>53</sup> Many of those detained also suspected that they had been followed for several days prior to the evening of their arrest.<sup>54</sup>

The arrests were directed by the Revolutionary Court and carried out by the Revolutionary Guards, specifically the Information Bureau of the Intelligence Office.<sup>55</sup> The Guards carried with them a list of the Bahá'ís whose arrest had been ordered by officials at the Shiraz Revolutionary Court.<sup>56</sup> The detainees arrested in the course of the night were taken to the Sepah-i Shiraz, the headquarters and detention center controlled by the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>57</sup> The prison was used by the authorities as a processing center, an interrogation facility and a temporary holding pen.<sup>58</sup>



Dr. Bahram Afnan was the first of the detainees arrested by the Revolutionary Guards. Dr. Afnan was a well-known cardiologist in Shiraz. His family was descended from the Báb and he was a member of the newly reconstituted Local Spiritual Assembly of Shiraz. He was seized while driving to his clinic at 4 p.m. on October 23, 1982. Another group of Revolutionary Guards went to his home, intimidated his family, and confiscated Bahá'í files, documents, his passport, books and other personal effects.<sup>59</sup> Other detainees later noted that Dr. Afnan had been severely beaten before arriving at Sepah Prison.<sup>60</sup>

Ms. Simin Sabiri was arrested when she returned home that evening and found that the Revolutionary Guards were already waiting for her. At twenty-three years old, she was the youngest assistant to the Auxiliary Board, a member of the Education Committee and a Bahá'í children's class teacher.<sup>61</sup>

Mr. Parviz Goharriz was arrested towards the end of the evening. Three Revolutionary Guards came to his home around 10:30 p.m. and presented him with an order from the "Revolutionary Court and Prosecutor's Office of Shiraz" as evidence of the authority on which they were acting. The Revolutionary Guards also carried with them a list of the names of the Bahá'ís they were looking for. They questioned Mr. Goharriz about the whereabouts of those on the list and seized the family's address

<sup>53</sup> See, e.g., Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 19 (describing the Revolutionary Guards' repeated attempts to locate the Bahá'í registration book kept by Jamshid Siyavushi, the treasurer of the Shiraz Local Spiritual Assembly.) Olya Roohizadegan describes being confronted during interrogation with a notebook confiscated from her house, containing the phone numbers of many of her Bahá'í and Muslim friends. OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 84. The Guards also confiscated family photo albums and later asked the prisoners to identify those in the pictures (see e.g. OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 62).

<sup>54</sup> See e.g., Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 14; Written Account by Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad on February 4, 2001 [hereinafter "February 4, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account"], at 2.

<sup>55</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>56</sup> For descriptions of this list, see Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 15; Anvari Statement, *supra* note 49, at 1. For the role of the Revolutionary Court, see Written account of Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC). See also Letter of Hami Goharriz describing the arrest of his father, Parviz Goharriz (date illegible) (on file with IHRDC). In addition, OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 61, describes the Revolutionary Guards calling the Public Prosecutor to confirm how to proceed and the Public Prosecutor ordering that those arrested be brought to the Revolutionary Court. Similarly, Statement of Witness A (dated July 21, 2005) (on file with IHRDC) [hereinafter "Statement of Witness A"], at 1, describes one of the Revolutionary Guards calling their "boss" to confirm who was supposed to be arrested.

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 14-16; Anvari Statement, *supra* note 49, at 2; Interview with E. Naderi, *supra* note 43; Transcript of a conversation with Mrs. Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad by an acquaintance on January 8, 2006 [hereinafter "Mahmudnizhad Conversation"] at 3.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with E. Naderi, *supra* note 43; Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 1.

<sup>59</sup> Petition to Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, U.N. Special Representative on the human rights situation in Iran, by Mehdi Afnan, father of Bahram Afnan (dated January 27, 1990) (on file with IHRDC) at 1.

<sup>60</sup> Written account by Mr. Parviz Goharriz describing experiences of Bahram Afnan (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>61</sup> Written account by Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Simin Sabiri at 2, 8 (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

book. He was then taken into custody.<sup>62</sup> It is from Mr. Goharriz that we have the most detailed account of the treatment of the male detainees after their arrest.

The Revolutionary Guards came to the home of the Mahmudnizhad family at 7:30 in the evening. Mr. Mahmudnizhad was Secretary of the Shiraz LSA as well as an Auxiliary Board Member, and his teenage daughter Mona had attracted adverse attention at school for her outspoken defense of the Bahá'ís.<sup>63</sup> Mrs. Mahmudnizhad recalls:

I heard knocking at the door. I heard the neighbors across from us say: "They are not home, they have left." I was really surprised to hear our neighbor lying as we were home... So, I said: "Who is it?" Once I said that, they started banging on the door really fiercely and even kicking it. At that moment, I went and looked through the peephole and saw that there were five Revolutionary Guards behind the door... I opened the door and I saw how they rudely told our neighbor to go back inside and instruct[ed] her: "You are not to come out of the house until 12 a.m."<sup>64</sup>

The guards proceeded to knock on all the doors in the building complex, ordering all the residents to remain in their homes until 12 a.m. The Mahmudnizhads were forced to watch as their home was searched and ransacked for several hours. One guard was stationed outside the house; three others searched the house while the fifth guarded the family.<sup>65</sup> After several hours of searching they prepared to leave. Mrs. Mahmudnizhad takes up the story:

They came and pointed at [my daughter] Mona and [my husband] Mr. [Yadu'llah] Mahmudnizhad and said, "You and you, let's go!" I got really upset. I said: "she's just a child, where are you taking her, please don't take her." They said no and showed me some of Mona's writings [about the Bahá'í persecutions in Iran]. They said, "the person who wrote these isn't a child. With her writings, she can divert the world towards ignorance."<sup>66</sup>

Most of the prisoners arrived at the prison blindfolded. Bahá'ís are considered unclean and thus untouchable by devout Muslims. The prisoners were therefore instructed to hold onto one end of a rolled-up newspaper as they were led around the prison so that their guards would not be "contaminated" by their touch.<sup>67</sup> After some initial processing, the Bahá'í prisoners were kept together in the same cell.<sup>68</sup> Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad later described her arrival at the Sepah prison to her mother, when the latter joined her in prison:<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Letter of Hami Goharriz, son of Parviz Goharriz, regarding his father's arrest (date illegible) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>63</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>64</sup> Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Id.* (stating "One of the Revolutionary Guards was stationed outside the house and... there were four [Revolutionary Guards] inside [the house]. Three in Mona's room searching and one controlling us to make sure we didn't talk to each other. After a while, the three Revolutionary Guards came out of the room with filled plastic bags. They had thrown books on the floor and also filled other plastic bags and put them in the room to take with them.")

<sup>66</sup> *Id.*

<sup>67</sup> Written Account by Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad on March 28, 2001 [hereinafter "March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account"] at 30. The blindfolded prisoners were routinely ordered to hold onto rolled-up newspapers held out by the guards to be led, apparently because the guards considered them "*najis*" (referring to a type of ritual impurity).

<sup>68</sup> *Id.* at 31. However, male and female prisoners were separated and kept in different parts of the prison. It was after arriving in their gender-segregated cells that a number of the Bahá'í prisoners were able to discuss with the other prisoners what had happened to them. Many of the accounts of how the arrests were conducted came from the Bahá'ís sharing with each other the circumstances of their arrests.

<sup>69</sup> Mrs. Mahmudnizhad was arrested in January 1983 when she came to the prison to follow up on Mona's case. Instead of assisting Mrs. Mahmudnizhad, prison officials arrested her and detained her with the other Bahá'í prisoners. *See* Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 6, 19.



Mona Mahmudnizhad was a high school student and a teacher of Bahá'í children's classes.

Mona said, "They took us in a yellow Renault, they blindfolded us and had us bend down with our faces against our knees so we don't see outside. They took us into Sepah's prison and there they separated us. They gave me a newspaper and took me inside the prison." She added, "When I entered the cell, the first thing they did was give me two blankets and something to put under my head and told me to 'Go and sleep.' So I looked and saw that there was a large hall and the lights were off. It was 11 p.m. and nothing much could be done. The first thing I did was put my forehead on the floor... All of a sudden, I raised my head and saw people standing around me. They asked me, 'What is your crime, why have they brought you here?' I said, I have committed no crime and have done nothing. I am only a Bahá'í."<sup>70</sup>

One of the Revolutionary Guards' primary targets, Mr. Jamshid Siyavushi, the Treasurer of the Shiraz Local Spiritual Assembly (LSA), initially escaped their net.<sup>71</sup> Mr. Siyavushi knew that he was a likely target for the Revolutionary authorities and had already gone underground. However, he made a regular practice of visiting the parents of his cousin, Hidayatu'llah Siyavushi, who had been arrested several months before.<sup>72</sup> His wife, Mrs.

Tahirih Arjumandi Siyavushi, described what happened next to Ms. Ruhiiyih (Ruhi) Jahanpour:

While they [Revolutionary Guards] were inside the house Jamshid arrived and rang the bell. Hidayat's mother asked who it was and Jamshid said, "It's me," and then Hidayat's mother replied, "you came to the wrong place." Jamshid got the hint and started leaving the house but one of the guards saw and ran outside the house and stopped him and he was immediately arrested. They said, "Oh, we've arrested Jamshid!" Mrs. Siyavushi said that they forgot what they had originally come for - to ask Mrs. Siyavushi questions about Hidayat. Instead they took Jamshid to prison.<sup>73</sup>

The authorities believed that, as the Treasurer of the LSA, Jamshid possessed not only large sums of money donated by Bahá'ís, but also a complete list of members of the local Bahá'í community. Two nights after his arrest, at about 10 p.m., Jamshid was taken, shaking and weak, back to his home by four armed guards to search for this membership list.<sup>74</sup> His wife recalled:

He was shaking heavily because of the torture he had suffered and could not keep his balance. I went to ask him what had happened to him but he was being watched too closely by the Pasdars [Revolutionary Guards]... From the conversation of the Pasdars I understood that they were after the registration book for the Shiraz Bahá'ís and the donation records and receipts. Jamshid... did not want to give them the registration book and so he had endured whatever kind of torture necessary to protect the names of the local Bahá'ís... The Pasdars locked me in a room. I could hear them telling Jamshid, "either give us the registration book and money or we'll kill you here right now." I got very scared. I knew that they were armed, so I screamed and banged on the door. [When they opened the door], I saw that Jamshid had tears in his eyes and was resisting their

<sup>70</sup> Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 2-3.

<sup>71</sup> National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD (Vol. XIX, 1983-1986) at 180 [hereinafter "BAHÁ'Í WORLD XIX"].

<sup>72</sup> Written account of Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Tahirih Siyavushi (date October 6, 1981) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>73</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 19.

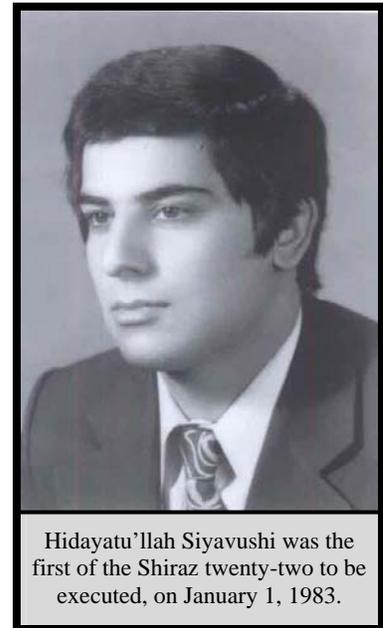
<sup>74</sup> *Id.*; OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 142. Ruhii Jahanpour explains: "[S]omeone had told them that there was a registration book, a notebook with all the names of the Bahá'ís, in Jamshid's possession. So they kept searching Jamshid's house." The Revolutionary Guards returned several other times to search Jamshid's house: on a subsequent occasion, as Tahirih described to Ruhii, "they came back once again with Jamshid and he was surrounded by guards when they entered the house. This second time she said her husband was much thinner and looked very pale and it was obvious he had been tortured." Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 19.

inhumane treatment in the meekest way possible. The Pasdars saw that they were getting nowhere [with us] and took him back to prison.<sup>75</sup>

Of the thirty-nine Bahá'ís arrested in the October sweep, the Mahmudnizhad and Goharriz families were the only ones to report receiving documents that confirmed the arrest and detention of their family members. Mrs. Mahmudnizhad was also given a list of the items that the Revolutionary Guards had confiscated and taken with them.<sup>76</sup> The other families of those detained were not able to receive any information about their missing loved ones until twenty-eight days after the arrests.<sup>77</sup> Rumors began to spread through Shiraz that Bahá'ís were being hunted down and being forced to convert.<sup>78</sup>

All the detainees were taken to the Sepah-i Shiraz after their arrest<sup>79</sup> but their families were not informed of this at the time. The authorities initially denied that any of the October arrests had taken place and claimed to be ignorant of the location of the detainees.<sup>80</sup> However, the Bahá'í community of Shiraz repeatedly pressed for more information. Eventually, in the face of community pressure, the local authorities acknowledged that the prisoners had been arrested and detained at the Sepah-i Shiraz.<sup>81</sup>

Of the thirty-nine Shiraz Bahá'ís arrested in October 1982, twenty-seven were eventually released. Some were released soon after their arrest, but others like Mr. Parviz Goharriz and Mr. Habibu'llah Hakimi, served several years in prison before being released.<sup>82</sup>



Hidayatu'llah Siyavushi was the first of the Shiraz twenty-two to be executed, on January 1, 1983.

<sup>75</sup> Written account of Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Tahirih Siyavushi (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC). Tahirih shared this information with her cellmates after her own arrest, which took place a month after the arrest of her husband.

<sup>76</sup> Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 3. Mrs. Mahmudnizhad recounts what happened next: “[T]he next morning we went to the Sepah prison and they told us, ‘No! No one has been brought to this prison in the manner you describe.’ The night before, when the [Revolutionary Guards] were leaving, they gave us something in writing, that said something like, ‘We took such and such stuff and Mr. Mahmudnizhad and Mona’ and had signed it. They had even written and signed Anbari instead of Anvari, meaning they didn’t even have proper education... Anyway we showed the signed paper and I told them, ‘I want my child and husband from you. I’m sure they are here.’ So they made some phone calls and finally said, ‘Yes, they were brought here.’ We tried that day to leave some clothes or something for them but the [Revolutionary Guards] wouldn’t accept it.” Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 3.

<sup>77</sup> *Id.* at 4. Mrs. Mahmudnizhad describes the uncertainty families faced as they attempted to obtain visits with their relatives in detention: “When we’d get there, outside of the prison, the Revolutionary Guards would first read the names of [other, non-Bahá’í] prisoners who had been executed. Well, the family of the executed person, they had brought stuff, like clothes and fruit and things, and they would start screaming and crying and drop all their things. The other relatives would drag them and force them to leave to prevent their arrest. We were facing this every day. At the same time we’d stand and listen thinking that maybe one of our loved ones is amongst the executed... We’d go at 1:00 p.m. and they would keep us till 6-7 p.m. in the cold of the winter and wouldn’t tell us if we have visitation that day or not. Eventually they would tell us “You have no visitation today so leave.” *Id.*

<sup>78</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 13. Ruhi Jahanpour recounts that a number of Muslim residents of Shiraz had learned of and were upset by the mass arrests of the Bahá'ís. For example, a taxi passenger remarked, “oh, my God, have you guys heard, now they’ve been arresting all these Bahá'ís in town, they are looking for Bahá'ís and hurting them and trying to convert them to Islam.” Ruhi also overheard a store customer describing how upset she was by the arrest of her mother’s doctor, who happened to be Bahá'í. Ruhi commented that “[e]veryone in the city seemed to have heard about the arrests.” *Id.*

<sup>79</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 5. It was located near the end of Simeetri Street in Shiraz (*see* Statement of Witness A at 3.)

<sup>80</sup> Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 3. Statement of Witness A at page 5 recounts that the families weren’t sure whether the November detainees were being held in Sepah until, a few days later, one of the Revolutionary Guards announced that there would be no visitation for 40 days.

<sup>81</sup> Written statement by Mitra Nirumand, sister of Mahshid Nirumand, dated June 8, 1990 [hereinafter “Statement of Mitra Nirumand”], at 2.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from a local Bahá'í in Shiraz (providing list of Bahá'ís who were arrested in October and November) (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC). Mr. Hakimi was held for over six years, during which time he was transferred to Evin Prison in Tehran

## 4.2. The November arrests

On November 29, 1982, the Revolutionary Guards arrested a second group of Bahá'ís whose names had been omitted from the first round-up. Most of those arrested served on Bahá'í community committees of one sort or another, notably those associated with religious education or youth programs. The new group of detainees included Mrs. Izzat Ishraqi, Ms. Roya Ishraqi, Mr. Inayatu'llah Ishraqi, Mrs. Tahirih Siyavushi, Mrs. Olya Roohizadegan, Ms. Shirin Dalvand, Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour, Mrs. Minoos Anvari and Ms. Mahshid Nirumand. Both Ms. Jahanpour and Mrs. Anvari have given statements to the IHRDC about their experiences. Mrs. Roohizadegan has also published a detailed account of her detention.

As in October, the Revolutionary Guards had with them a list of the Bahá'ís marked for arrest. In one case, Revolutionary Guards came to the home of one target and found another Bahá'í who was on their list and arrested him as well. He was told that since the Revolutionary Guards had intended to come to his home later, they might as well arrest him now.<sup>83</sup> An eyewitness present when Mr. Inayatu'llah Ishraqi was arrested described how the Revolutionary Guards searched his home:

They had so much power then that they did not use warrants, but I remember when Inayatu'llah Ishraqi opened the door they just showed their card from Sepah-i Pasdaran [Revolutionary Guards] and they came in... They searched everything and took the books, papers and pictures. They had a large (A4) sheet of paper that [a Revolutionary Guard] took out of his pocket which was full of names on both sides. [The Guard] then said, "from this house we are arresting and taking [so-and-so]." I said, "why?" ... He said, "we have a few question[s] for them." Later, we guessed that when the first group was arrested, they were asked about the membership of our community bod[ies] and [gave up] their names... The officials wanted to arrest the leadership of the community first and then go from there.<sup>84</sup>

All the arrests followed the same pattern. Revolutionary Guards would come to the target's home, confiscate personal property - mostly Bahá'í artifacts or items of value - and take away the individuals on their list.

Another witness recalls:

The Islamic [Revolutionary] Guards arrived at 10 p.m. and, after [a] one hour search of the house, due to confusion resulting from similarity of [our] names and ages... they had to leave to check with their office and make certain which of us had to be arrested that evening. However, they were soon back [having confirmed] the identity of their suspect. On their arrival they clearly specified that Mahshid [Nirumand], recently graduated in Physics, would be taken with them and also warned that none of our family members was allowed to talk to her within the next couple of hours [while] they were searching our residence. It was hard to know what they were looking for... at the end of the evening, about 2 a.m., all the seized materials were transferred to their car.<sup>85</sup>

Mrs. Minoos Anvari, a member of the local Bahá'í Education Committee, was visiting her family on November 29 when they received word that their relatives Mohammad and Firishtih Anvari, both members of the LSA of Marvdasht, a city near Shiraz,<sup>86</sup> had been arrested and were looking for someone to take care of their two small children. The Anvari family was in the process of arranging to send Minoos's brother, Nayyer, to retrieve the children, when two Revolutionary Guards arrived at the family

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and subsequently back to Shiraz. He was re-arrested in 1990 and was later re-released. IHRDC obtained details of the experiences of Mr. Goharriz and Mr. Hakimi from accounts provided by family members.

<sup>83</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Id.* at 1-3.

<sup>85</sup> Statement of Mitra Nirumand, *supra* note 81, at 1-2.

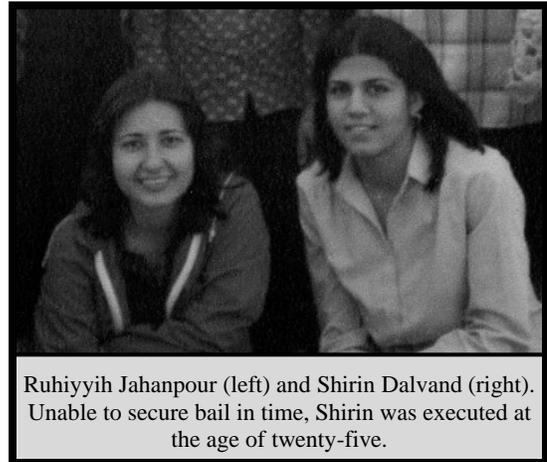
<sup>86</sup> Certain suburbs of or towns near Shiraz, such as Marvdasht and Abadih, had their own Bahá'í administrative bodies.

home. They arrested both Minoo and Tahirih Siyavushi, the wife of the LSA Treasurer Jamshid Siyavushi, who was renting an apartment from the Anvari family.<sup>87</sup>

The two women were taken together to Sepah Prison.<sup>88</sup>

I sat in the front seat next to Tahirih. I don't know who was in the back seat but it was full. [The Guards] told Tahirih and me to cover our faces with our *chadors* and put our heads on our knees and not look up... They kept yelling, "Close your eyes! Don't look!"... After we got out of the car they blindfolded us. They were yelling and screaming at us. I didn't know what was going on.<sup>89</sup>

Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour and Ms. Shirin Dalvand had spent the day visiting some of the families of the Bahá'ís who had been arrested in October. They had both sensed that they were being followed throughout the day.<sup>90</sup> The young women were close friends who served together on the community's Junior Youth Committee and Shirin was staying at the Jahanpour residence. At approximately 11 p.m., after the family had gone to bed, seven or eight Revolutionary Guards raided the house and announced that they had come to arrest Ruhi and Shirin. While the Guards were searching the home, they referred to the Jahanpours as "*najis*", meaning dirty or untouchable.<sup>91</sup>



Ms. Jahanpour later recalled the justification the Guards offered for their actions:

When they were arresting me they were saying, "we know that we are doing the right thing, because we are preparing the way for Mahdí to come." They called themselves soldiers of *Imam-i Zaman*.<sup>92</sup> They said, "We have to get rid of all of you to prepare the way for him to come. The only reason that he hasn't come yet is because of you dirty people."<sup>93</sup>

Ms. Jahanpour was also able to describe what happened when she and Ms. Dalvand arrived at the prison:

As soon as we got to the Sepah prison, they gave us pieces of cloth to blindfold ourselves, and then they took us out of the car. One of the guards took a piece of paper, and told me to hold one end of it and he held the other, and Shirin held on to the back of my *chador*, and we started walking. After going some distance, he told us, "sit down, but don't talk to each other." We were just sitting... We could hear so much noise and sound but we couldn't see. We could hear them telling each other, "Write everything. Write everything."

<sup>87</sup> Anvari Statement, *supra* note 49, at 1.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Id.*

<sup>90</sup> Ruhi Jahanpour recounts: "That afternoon, Shirin and I went and visited a family member, Mrs. Goharriz, whose husband was in prison. When we were returning home, we decided to take a taxi - we didn't take my car because I had always taken my car when I visited the prison, and figured it might have been identified. But when we got out of the taxi, I saw that a guy was following us. When we got close to our house, I said, 'Shirin, let's not go to the house, let's walk to the store and just get busy and even buy something, maybe we could distract him and get into the house before he sees us.' We did that, but when we came out of the store after a long time he was still following us. I told Shirin, 'let's not go in the house, let's keep walking.' But unfortunately, when we were passing near my house, my mom walked out of the house and called out, 'Oh, you are now home.' At that point we had no choice but go into the house. So we went in and we had dinner, but both Shirin and I knew we had been followed by somebody very closely." Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 12, 14-15.

<sup>91</sup> *Id.* at 15.

<sup>92</sup> This, meaning Leader of the Age, is a reference to the Twelfth Imam.

<sup>93</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 15-16.

...One of the Guards came to me and asked, "how about your sister? Has your sister also been active? What kind of activities has she been involved in?" And I said, "well, we don't have any more activities." He kept asking, "What kind of *tashkilat* (establishments or activities) do you have?" I really had no idea that they knew so much about us, therefore I said, "we don't have *tashkilat* like before." Then he laughed and left. And then I heard him saying, "write, write down how her sister said 'even the ones that you executed, they were innocent people, they were only Bahá'ís.' And write down how her mother was saying a prayer aloud." Suddenly we heard somebody walk in and say, "tell everybody, we arrested Farhad too. Farhad is their leader." Then we figured out that Farhad Bihmardi had been arrested as well.<sup>94</sup>

Altogether forty-one Bahá'ís were arrested on the evening of November 29.<sup>95</sup> Those who were imprisoned that evening were informed by the other non-Bahá'í prisoners that only an hour before their arrival at Sepah Prison, the authorities had transferred the Bahá'ís who had been arrested in October to Adelabad prison, another penal facility on the outskirts of the city.<sup>96</sup> The prisoners were told that the authorities had wanted to avoid any interaction between the two groups.<sup>97</sup>

### 4.3. Appeals for help

Immediately after the initial round of arrests in October 1982, the families of the Shiraz detainees began approaching senior officials in the revolutionary government and the religious establishment for help.<sup>98</sup>

The parents of Dr. Bahram Afnan kept a careful record of their efforts to lobby for their son's release, detailed in a letter prepared for the United Nations Special Representative on the human rights situation in Iran, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, in anticipation of his visit to Iran in January 1990. Below is a partial list of the officials they contacted in the course of these appeals:

The IRI President, Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior (by telegraph, October 23, 1982); Ayatollah Montazeri in Qom (by mail, November 14, 1982); Attorney General Ayatollah Rabbani Amlashi (by telegraph, November 24, 1982); the Prosecutor General at the Revolutionary Office of Shiraz (by letter, November 27, 1982); Imam Jom'eh (by letter, November 28, 1982); Religious Magistrate Qaza'i (by letter, December 21, 1982); Second appeal to Ayatollah Montazeri and the Prosecutor General at the Revolutionary Office of Shiraz (by letter, December 23, 1982); Second appeal to Imam Jom'eh (by letter, December 29, 1982); Second appeal to Prime Minister's Office at Tehran (by letter, December 31, 1982); Complaint addressed to General Investigation Department, Tehran (by letter, December 31, 1982); Complaint to Parliamentary Article 90 Commission in Tehran (by letter, January, 1983); Written petition to Mousavi Ardebili, Head of the IRI Supreme Court in Tehran (entered in the Register of the Chief Supreme Court Office on June 1, 1983, under No. B/108231).<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 16-17.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from a local Bahá'í in Shiraz (providing list of Bahá'ís who were arrested in October and November) (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>96</sup> See Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 21, 27; Anvari Statement, *supra* note 49, at 1-3.

<sup>97</sup> Written account by Olya Roothizadegan describing experiences of Simin Sabiri (undated) (on file with IHRDC) at 3.

<sup>98</sup> See, e.g., Written account by Witness D (dated October 1, 1983) (on file with IHRDC) at 4; February 4, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 54, at 4.

<sup>99</sup> Petition to Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, U.N. Special Representative on the human rights situation in Iran, by Mehdi Afnan, father of Bahram Afnan (dated January 27, 1990) (on file with IHRDC).

## 5. Criminal Proceedings

After initial processing, both rounds of detainees went through two stages of pre-trial interrogations followed by a brief court hearing. The first stage - *Bazdasht* (or detention) - was the harshest. This was a period of "preliminary" investigation conducted by masked interrogators at the Sepah prison.<sup>100</sup> The second stage - *Bazpursi* (or questioning) - was conducted by Assistant Public Prosecutors and took place at the Revolutionary Court building in Shiraz. The court hearing - *Dadgah* - was conducted by the Religious Magistrate. The Bahá'í detainees who were brought before the Court were either sentenced to death or were instructed to pay large sums of money as bail in exchange for their temporary freedom.<sup>101</sup> If the prisoner was sentenced to execution, then according to Islamic law he or she was then given four formal opportunities to convert to Islam - a process known as *Istitabih*.

Most of the information regarding the methods of interrogation and treatment of the Bahá'í prisoners comes from stories the prisoners themselves shared with family members who were eventually able to visit them in detention,<sup>102</sup> or from accounts provided by prisoners who were later released. Prison visits were restricted to immediate family members and were sometimes cut short, lasting only 5 minutes.<sup>103</sup>

### 5.1. Bazdasht – the preliminary investigation

Male and female prisoners were held separately at Sepah Prison but all the prisoners went through much the same process. When they first arrived, the Bahá'í prisoners were informed of the prison rules that would apply to them during their detention. The Bahá'ís were categorized as "*najis*" (impure), therefore they were instructed that they were not to allow their personal belongings to come into contact with those of the other prisoners.<sup>104</sup> Even the clothing line that they could use to dry their clothes was to be kept separate.<sup>105</sup> The Bahá'ís were forbidden from saying Bahá'í prayers or openly practicing their faith in any way.<sup>106</sup>

Once the Bahá'í prisoners had been informed of the prison rules, they were taken for administrative processing. Ruhi Jahanpour recalls:

[T]hey called us to line up and before we left the cell, they gave each one of us a cloth to blindfold ourselves. We held onto each other's chadors and walked to the room where they took our pictures and assigned us numbers for our files... After asking our names, they asked each of us what our crime was and we replied, "*Bahá'í*", and they didn't deny it.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>100</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 107. During the period of detention ("*Bazdasht*"), a number of prisoners went through lengthy interrogations and thus came to refer to this stage as "*Bazju'i*" (interrogation).

<sup>101</sup> *Id.* at 107-108. Properties which were put up as "bail" would be confiscated by the court if those individuals were later called to appear in court and failed to do so.

<sup>102</sup> As noted above, families reported being denied visitation for at least 28 days (in the case of female prisoners) and 40 days (in the case of male prisoners). See Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 5 and Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 57, at 4.

<sup>103</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 6 and Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 57, at 5, both mention visits lasting 5 minutes. The visitation times for the men and women were separate: on Saturdays for women and Wednesdays for men. Sources indicate that there was a discriminatory pattern against the Bahá'ís. Since it was believed that Bahá'ís were "*najis*" (impure), they were required to wait and be the last group to visit with their families so that the visitation room could later be hosed down in order to purify the room. Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 6.

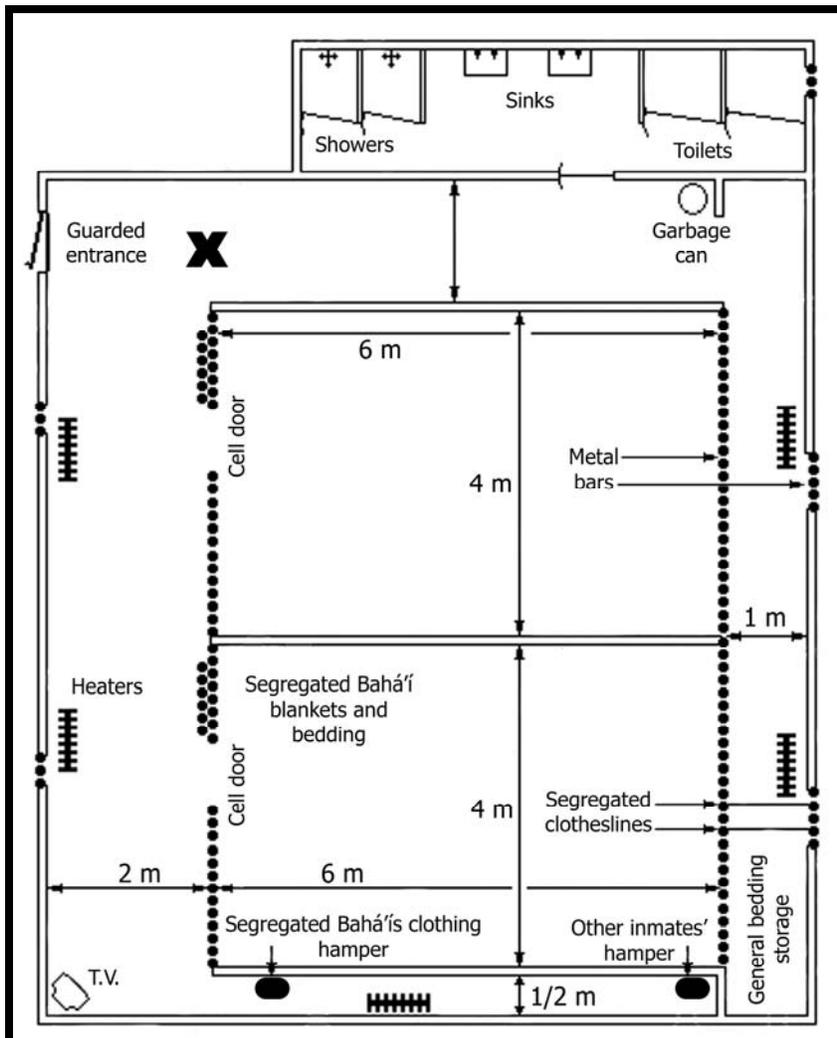
<sup>104</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 17, describes how the Bahá'í prisoners were informed of these rules by the *mas'ul-i band* (person responsible for the ward) the morning after they were arrested. According to one prisoner's account, reproduced in BAHÁ'Í WORLD XIX, *supra* note 71, at 263, these rules were imposed by order of the Religious Magistrate.

<sup>105</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 17. On kitchen duty, Bahá'í inmates assigned the task of washing up were told not to rinse the dishes after cleaning them as this would make the dishes impure for the other prisoners. A Muslim prisoner would then be brought in to finish rinsing the dishes. Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 18.

<sup>106</sup> *Id.* at 17-18.

<sup>107</sup> *Id.* at 20.

Most of the prisoners were then returned to one of two large cells where they remained for the duration of their incarceration.<sup>108</sup> However, a smaller minority – typically the more prominent detainees like Mr. Yada’illah Mahmudnizhad, Mr. Jamshid Siyavushi or Mrs. Nusrat Yalda’i – were separated from the two main groups and held elsewhere in the prison.<sup>109</sup>



**Communal Cells in Sepah Prison**

The doors of the above depicted cells were always open. The prisoner could walk from one cell to the other. The number of prisoners ranged from 65 to 96. Due to the limited capacity of the two cells, some of the prisoners used the hallway to sit and sleep. These two cells had no natural light and the artificial lighting was always on. The prisoners would be blindfolded from the location marked X and taken for interrogations.

All the detainees were subjected to repeated interrogation. The interrogators appeared to have two principal aims: first, to gather further information on the community’s activities and membership; and second, to try to convince the prisoners to recant their faith and convert to Islam. To this end the interrogators employed a range of techniques to wear down their subjects: individual interrogations; group interrogations; “face-to-face” interrogations; and finally the threat or use of torture.

### *Individual Interrogations*

In the first few months of imprisonment, the prisoners endured long interrogations of fourteen hours or more. Sometimes the sessions would be conducted orally, on other occasions the prisoners would be asked to respond on paper to written questionnaires. Sometimes the detainees were forced to transcribe the interrogation as it progressed. The Bahá’ís were usually blindfolded during the oral interrogations. When the detainee was required to write, it was the interrogator who wore a mask. In addition to

these precautions to protect the interrogators’ identities, the prisoners usually found they were positioned facing the wall during both types of interrogation.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>108</sup> See diagram of women’s holding cell at Sepah-i Shiraz above. IHRDC believes that the male prisoners were kept under similar conditions.

<sup>109</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 27; Letter by Witness E (dated December 5, 1982) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>110</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 24, 32, 36-37; Witness statement of Farshid Arjumandi (dated December 16, 2005) [hereinafter “Arjumandi Statement”] (on file with IHRDC) at 38.

Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour, who went through both the preliminary (*Bazdasht*) and official (*Bazpursi*) investigative phases before being released, later carefully documented the specific questions asked during her interrogation sessions. She noted that the same question would be asked repeatedly, with the interrogator often spending several hours on just one question. Ms. Jahanpour recalled some of the most common questions:

Explain Bahá'ism... How Bahá'í are you... How steadfast are you [in your faith]... Name all the Bahá'ís you know in Shiraz and write down each name, address, previous and current job... Name all the Bahá'ís in Iran... Write the name and identifying information for any Bahá'ís you know outside of the country... At what age did you declare yourself [a Bahá'í]... From what age did you start voting... Who did you vote for membership in the assembly... Name the members of the assembly from the year you declared yourself until now... Have you gone to children's classes... How many classes have you attended... Which celebrations, get-togethers, groups and deepening classes have you attended... Have you donated to the Bahá'í fund? If so, how much... Who chairs the feast in your area... Who is the Treasurer of the assembly in your town... Name the assistants of the Hands of the Cause of God<sup>111</sup>... Name the Hands of the Cause of God... Name the Auxiliary Board Members... Name the members of the National Spiritual Assembly... Name your children's teachers... Are you willing to let go of your beliefs?<sup>112</sup>

Similarly, another witness recounted:

They would also ask a series of questions that had nothing to do with us, like how do you send money to Israel? For espionage whom do you contact? Questions that they have gradually come to know are not applicable to us.<sup>113</sup>

The interrogators placed a heavy emphasis on getting the Bahá'í prisoners to recant their religion. They would accuse the Bahá'í prisoners of being “infidels” and tell them that in order for them to save their lives they had only two options: to recant or be executed.<sup>114</sup> Their refusal to recant often resulted in long theological harangues regarding Bahá'í beliefs. Mrs. Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad recalled one such session in which her interrogator tried to provoke her into giving answers that would ‘expose’ Bahá'í beliefs as posing a political threat to the Islamic Republic:

He spent seven or eight hours asking me the same questions and I was extremely tired. Throughout this whole time, I was not given permission to use the bathroom or to drink a glass of water...He asked his last question repeatedly over the last two hours of the interrogation, and the question was as follows: “We put you people in prison, we torture you, we whip you, we are unjust to you, we insult you and finally we kill you; Will you not arise to take revenge [against] us?” [I responded] “no”, but then he asked, “why?” So I responded as such: “[b]ecause our aim is to achieve peace and the unity of mankind. If we do the same, we would be exactly as you are, and the revenge will continue to the end of time; therefore, no one will be the victorious as a result.” He repeated th[ese] questions along the same lines, and I gave several responses...<sup>115</sup>

After a heated discussion with Mrs. Mahmudnizhad about Bahá'í writings pertaining to the notion of injustice, the interrogator became frustrated and defensive:

He asked, “do you mean to say that we are oppressors?” I replied, “I am not the one who said such a thing. You were the one who mentioned that you are unjust and that you kill.” ... This dialogue went on for several hours, all of which I had to transcribe. I was extremely tired; I was nauseous

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<sup>111</sup> This is a reference to a Bahá'í administrative position.

<sup>112</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 35-36.

<sup>113</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 7.

<sup>114</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 76.

<sup>115</sup> March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 67, at 38. As noted in footnote 69 above, Mrs. Mahmudnizhad was not initially arrested with the October and November groups, but was arrested later in January 1983 when she came to the prison to follow up on the case of her daughter Mona.

and was about to lose consciousness. I told him that I was no longer able to write. He looked at my face and noticed the illness, which was apparent from the color of my skin... they enjoyed seeing us suffer like that.<sup>116</sup>

Although the interrogators tried to hide their true identities, some of the Bahá'í detainees who had been imprisoned in Shiraz before during previous episodes of anti-Bahá'í sentiment, were able to draw a connection with their previous experiences. Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour, who had also been detained in February 1982, seven months prior to the fall arrests, recognized the voice of one of her old interrogators:

When I sat down the interrogator said, “do you know me?” I said, “I don’t know, but I think from your voice perhaps you are my former interrogator, you sound familiar to me.” He said, “I don’t need to tell you that this is a prison - this is not your auntie’s house and it’s not like last year. Last year, the *Komiteh*<sup>117</sup> arrested you; this year, *Sepah-i Pasdaran* has arrested you.”<sup>118</sup>

Members of the Bahá'í community who had been arrested before were told that these new arrests were their fault, that had they previously been more forthcoming regarding the community’s activities, their friends would not now find themselves in such a predicament.<sup>119</sup>

When the usual interrogation techniques failed to yield results, the interrogators would often try another tactic. They would force a prominent Bahá'í detainee to attend an interrogation session to encourage the subject to be more responsive. Mr. Yadu'llah Mahmudnizhad, an Auxiliary Board Member, was frequently forced to act in this capacity. Mr. Mahmudnizhad had himself been repeatedly subjected to torture while in detention, so in order to protect the Bahá'í prisoners from lashings, he would encourage them to be honest:<sup>120</sup>

He’d tell the friends [Bahá'ís], “we don’t have any hidden matters. Explicitly explain to them [the interrogators] the truth about the Bahá'í teachings and the methods of the Bahá'í administration.”<sup>121</sup>

Mr. Mahmudnizhad evidently thought that by refusing to talk the detainees were only feeding the regime’s paranoia and would provoke even harsher treatment.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 67, at 38.

<sup>117</sup> This was a reference to Ruhi Jahanpour’s previous arrest in February 1982. Historian David Menashri explains: “The *Komitehs* sprang up during the period preceding the fall of the Shah and, by organizing demonstrations and strikes, contributed greatly to it. *Komitehs*... were formed in different districts and towns, usually with the help of prominent clerics and often under their leadership. After [Khomeini]’s rise to power, they continued to exist, considering themselves called upon to promote the revolution’s goals and to intervene in local administration - all the more readily because of the weakness of the central government.” DAVID MENASHRI, IRAN: A DECADE OF WAR AND REVOLUTION 82 (1990) [hereinafter “MENASHRI”].

<sup>118</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 21-22. Ruhi Jahanpour had previously been arrested and interrogated about her Bahá'í activities in February 1982. Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 4-12.

<sup>119</sup> *Id.* at 22 (recounting that Ruhi Jahanpour was told: “Last year... people like you came here and they didn’t say anything and this is what happened—because of you and people like you that kept their mouth shut and didn’t give out any information, now you’ve got to say everything about yourself, about others, about the *tashkilat*, institutions, everything.”)

<sup>120</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC). It was common practice in the prison to set *Ta'zir* punishment (discretionary punishment under Islamic law—see section 5.1.4 below) for telling a lie at 74 lashes.

<sup>121</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>122</sup> See, e.g., Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 25 (noting “[T]hey lashed a couple of them really badly and Mr. Mahmudnizhad had decided that they should go ahead and pass on the information (about Bahá'í institutions) to the interrogators. We guessed that perhaps Mr. Mahmudnizhad made that decision in order to protect more people from being lashed.”)

## Group Interrogations

In addition to interrogating individual detainees, the prison authorities conducted group interrogations in which the detained members of a specific Bahá'í committee were brought together in one room in the hope that their answers could be used to trip up others of their group. Once again, Mr. Mahmudnizhad would be brought in to encourage the members of a given committee to provide information regarding their committee's activities.<sup>123</sup>

Mrs. Olya Roohizadegan, a member of the local Bahá'í Protection Committee,<sup>124</sup> was interrogated together with 15 or 16 of her colleagues from the committee.<sup>125</sup> They were all blindfolded and gathered in one room. The prisoners often had to rely entirely on their hearing and felt disoriented as different people entered and left the room. Mrs. Roohizadegan heard Mr. Mahmudnizhad's voice encouraging cooperation but could not tell if he was in the room or if the interrogators were playing a recording.<sup>126</sup> The interrogators wanted to know the names of any Bahá'ís who might have sought the committee's help after having recanted and converted to Islam. This information was particularly sensitive since for a convert to Islam to return to his or her prior faith would be considered apostasy, a crime punishable by death in Iran.<sup>127</sup>

In her memoir, Mrs. Roohizadegan recounts an incident from the interrogation:

He [the interrogator] said to us all, "if you don't give me the names of the other Bahá'ís we will torture you to death." He pointed to Farhad Bihmardi and said, "especially you! You have already received 200 lashes but you still refuse to give us your brother Farid's address in Tehran."<sup>128</sup> Then he told the other guard to go bring Mr. Mahmudnizhad before starting the trial, so that he could advise us to reveal other Bahá'ís' names.<sup>129</sup>

After her release from prison, Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour diligently recorded the questions asked during the group interrogation of the local Junior Youth Committee to which she was subjected. Many of these questions are generic and are typical of such sessions:

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<sup>123</sup> At this time many of the Bahá'í prisoners were hesitant to discuss their Bahá'í activities, unsure what sort of information might result in punishment for themselves or their fellow prisoners. Mr. Mahmudnizhad felt that if the Bahá'ís continued to remain silent about their activities it would reinforce suspicions that the Bahá'í community was in fact some sort of espionage organization. Several witnesses recounted that Mr. Mahmudnizhad's guidance gave them the assurance that it was appropriate for the Bahá'ís to be transparent about their activities. See OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 80; Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 22.

<sup>124</sup> The Protection Committee met with Bahá'ís who had previously recanted under pressure and were seeking the assistance of the Committee to return to the Bahá'í community.

<sup>125</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 82-83.

<sup>126</sup> *Id.* at 80. Mino Anvari recounts that at one point she snuck a peek and looked around the interrogation room: "At one point I peeked under my chador and could see that no one was in the room. I saw that there was one metal table and a guitar I recognized as my brother's, Naier,—I believe it was brought from Simin's house where it was used for Youth Committee activities... When the interrogator came back, he grabbed the guitar and came up to me, holding it near my ear, and started strumming it; he put his face near my ear and asked "do you like it?" I was shaking so much I couldn't even answer. Then he put it back." Anvari Statement, *supra* note 49, at 7-8.

<sup>127</sup> Olya Roohizadegan recounted: "I was frightened and puzzled, and didn't know what to do. Should I also mention other names? I remembered the individuals who had been forced to recant their faith and then had to come to the Protection committee in tears. I was worried that if the guards found out their names and brought them to the prison they would be tortured until they recanted again. With that thought, I decided to persevere in refusing to mention names." OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 80, 82. The interpretation of Shi'a law practiced by the Islamic Republic (based on interpretations of Khomeini's *Risalih*) asserts that conversion away from Islam into another faith—apostasy—is an offense that under certain circumstances may be punishable by death. See AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMAINI, TAHRIR AL-WASILAH (Beirut: Tawzi' Dar al-Ta'aruf lil-Matbu'aat) 366, 494-495 (1984).

<sup>128</sup> This was a reference to Farid Bihmardi who was a member of the third National Spiritual Assembly of Iran. He was eventually captured and executed in 1986.

<sup>129</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 81. Olya Roohizadegan recounts that Mr. Mahmudnizhad made an effort to protect the names of Bahá'ís who had recanted their faith but later returned to the Bahá'í community. *Id.* at 80.

Are you willing to let go of your beliefs... Are you all Bahá'ís... Identify all the [people in these] pictures...<sup>130</sup> Explain the details of your arrest last year, and write down who tried you and how you were released (this question was directed at one particular prisoner)... Describe your involvement [and] role in the Bahá'í community's activities... Name all the members of the Junior Youth Committee and include their address, profession, past and present situation... Write down the activities of the Committee... How many sub-committees were there in the Committee... How many sub-committees were under your supervision... How many junior youth were under your direct supervision... How many classes were you in charge of organizing... Which districts were you responsible for... Provide the names of the Bahá'í junior youth... Write down the names of those who participated in the meetings... Where were the gatherings held... Where were the Committee meetings held... Who was the Assembly liaison... Who invited you to be on the committee... Who was the liaison between the Committee and the Assembly... Who were the chairperson and secretary of the Committee... How much money did the committees receive from the assembly? What was the budget of the Committee... Who was the contact person from the National Assembly... How many times did you attend the conventions... Name the members of the Children's Classes Committee, including their addresses, and past and present places of work.<sup>131</sup>

### *Face-to-face interrogations*

The interrogators also frequently used the technique of "face-to-face" interrogations, in which they questioned two prisoners - seated or standing opposite each other - simultaneously. The prisoners would be asked the same questions with the interrogators waiting to play their answers off against each other and pounce on any inconsistencies. For example, Mrs. Firishtih Anvari and Mrs. Minoo Anvari were both interviewed face-to-face with Mr. Mahmudnizhad.<sup>132</sup> In addition to being interrogated as a group, individuals who had served on Bahá'í committees were often interrogated about their activities while face-to-face with another member of their committee. Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour and Ms. Simin Sabiri, who both served on the Education Committee, found themselves in precisely this situation.<sup>133</sup>

Sometimes, family members were interrogated face-to-face with one another to put them under additional pressure. For example, Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour reported that Ms. Zarrin Muqimi had been brought back from Adelabad Prison to the Sepah specifically in order for the interrogators to put her face-to-face with her father, Mr. Husayn Muqimi, while they confronted him with some questions they had.<sup>134</sup>

In building a case against a teenage detainee, Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad, the authorities relied on reports given by individuals in charge of her high school. The administration of Mona's school had come under the control of the anti-Bahá'í Hojjatiyeh organization who made it their business to question the Bahá'í students about their faith. Mona had been outspoken in her defense of her faith and about the abusive treatment that Bahá'ís had received. She was uncooperative during her interrogation sessions and so her interrogators turned to her father, Mr. Yadu'llah Mahmudnizhad, to persuade to her to be less reticent. Father and daughter were twice brought face-to-face with each other.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> This question referred to pictures that had been confiscated from Bahá'í homes by the Revolutionary Guards; the prisoners were asked to write down the names of all the people shown in each picture, as well as the place and year in which each picture had been taken. Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 33.

<sup>131</sup> *Id.* at 32-34.

<sup>132</sup> *Id.* at 32.

<sup>133</sup> *Id.* at 37.

<sup>134</sup> *Id.* at 27.

<sup>135</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

## *Use and threat of torture*

When the routine interrogation methods failed, the Sepah interrogators would resort to physical coercion, a practice they described as *Ta'zir*.<sup>136</sup> *Ta'zir* is an Islamic legal term for 'discretionary punishment' which in this context typically took the form of repeated lashings. Prison officials put members of the main Bahá'í administrative bodies under exceptional pressure to provide information about the Bahá'í community in Shiraz. They were placed in solitary confinement and repeatedly subjected to *Ta'zir* if they proved uncooperative.

Mr. Habibullah Hakimi described a typical *Ta'zir* session:

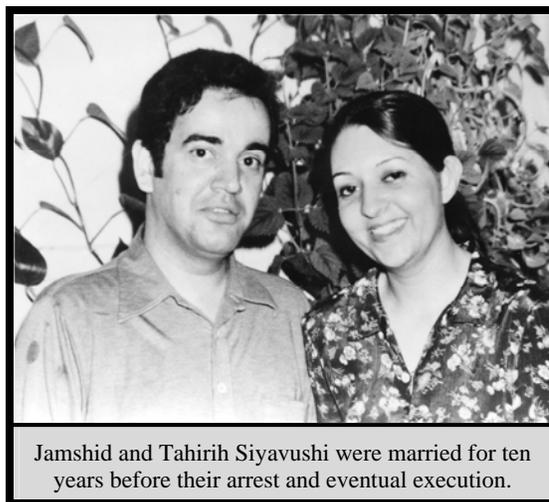
[The prisoner] was placed on the bed; his wrists and ankles were tied to the frame; the two big toes were tied together and the feet were lashed; or the male prisoners were laid face down and their naked body was lashed till blood would be gushing out of the wounds. The next day the same wounded body parts would be lashed again, through the bandages... the demons who were all called Abdullah, and had to work quickly, would lash several people with same filthy, bloody whips. This would cause serious wounds and many other side effects.

Dr. Ahmad Mazlum Jahrumi, who had served at the front with the army [as a medic], was lashed with those filthy whips. Due to their unsanitary condition, he developed tiny pus-filled boils on his back. He jokingly told the guards, "at the front, I used disposable syringes on your friends. It would have been nice if you would use disposable whips on me." This caused everyone to laugh.<sup>137</sup>

Mr. Jamshid Siyavushi, the Treasurer of the Shiraz LSA, was a frequent victim of such treatment.<sup>138</sup> His brother-in-law, Mr. Farshid Arjumandi, described the condition he found him in during a family visit to the prison:

He could not walk properly and could hardly speak. They had flogged his feet and his toenails were infected and a few had fallen out. As I mentioned he was taken to the prison hospital, and there was a great possibility that he would pass away in prison.<sup>139</sup>

In order to put pressure on his wife, Mrs. Tahirih Siyavushi, to recant her faith, the prison authorities threatened to torture Mr. Siyavushi until he died. The guards brought Mr. Siyavushi into the interrogation room where his wife was being questioned. He had to be supported by two guards, as he was no longer able to walk by himself. From his physical appearance, it was apparent that he had been tortured. His back had become infected after the repeated lashings, and



Jamshid and Tahirih Siyavushi were married for ten years before their arrest and eventual execution.

<sup>136</sup> In Islamic Law, *ta'zir* refers to punishments that have not been specified precisely in the *Shari'a* and left to the discretion of the judge, as opposed to the *hudud* punishments for certain offenses, which are fixed. See Article 16 of Iran's Islamic Penal Code.

<sup>137</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>138</sup> BAHÁ'Í WORLD XIX, *supra* note 71, at 180.

<sup>139</sup> Arjumandi Statement, *supra* note 110, at 6.

there was blood and pus under his toenails.<sup>140</sup> He had also been subjected to prolonged sleep deprivation.<sup>141</sup> Mr. Siyavushi, unable to endure the repeated abuse, twice used pieces of broken tile from the prison bathroom in unsuccessful attempts to kill himself.<sup>142</sup>

Mr. Siyavushi was finally allowed to rejoin the other Bahá'ís. His cellmate, Mr. Parviz Goharriz, recounted another occasion on which the Treasurer was singled out:

One night, because he had been seen joking and laughing with a friend by the Pasdars [Revolutionary Guards], [Jamshid] was summoned to the main prison office and subjected to harsh physical punishment. Usually, a thick, solid or hollow, electric cable plus other implements such as whips, chains, branches, and a pestle were used for beating the Bahá'ís. They also punched, kicked and hit prisoners about the head... That night, Mr. Siyavushi was treated in the same manner. The loudspeaker was turned up high and the sound of the blows could be heard louder and clearer to weaken the spirit of the other prisoners. The whole time, only the blows could be heard - [Jamshid] didn't make a sound. Only when the beating ended and he made it back to the cell, with difficulty, could we see the gravity of his condition.<sup>143</sup>

Dr. Bahram Afnan, who was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Shiraz, was separated from the other prisoners for several months. The fact that Dr. Afnan's family could trace its lineage to the family of the Báb aggravated the harsh treatment he received at the hands of the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>144</sup> The Bahá'ís would occasionally hear news about his condition from other non-Bahá'í prisoners which is how they learned that Dr. Afnan had suffered a heart-attack while he was being lashed:<sup>145</sup>

[Dr. Afnan's] prison cellmate recounted that his unconscious, torn and bloodied body was thrown back into the cell... The cable had cut deeply into his flesh... Breathing was hard for him and the lack of air in the cell made it even harder. Two days later, when he had recovered a little, he was again taken to the basement and under the torture of those demons he suffered a second heart attack and this time they [the prison authorities] were forced to take him to the hospital.<sup>146</sup>

Mrs. Tuba Za'irpur, who had been arrested in October 1982, was accused of being a reserve member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Shiraz.<sup>147</sup> Like the other leading members of the Bahá'í community, Mrs. Za'irpur was kept separately from the main group of detainees. She was held in a small cell with members of the general prison population. During this period, she was taken away to be tortured on three consecutive days. At each session 74 lashes were administered to the soles of her feet or to her back.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Written account of Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Tahirih Siyavushi (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC); see also BAHÁ'Í WORLD XIX, *supra* note 71, at 180.

<sup>141</sup> Written account of Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Tahirih Siyavushi (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>142</sup> BAHÁ'Í WORLD XIX, *supra* note 71, at 180; OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 147; Written account by Mr. Parviz Goharriz describing experiences of Jamshid Siyavushi (undated) (on file with IHRDC) at 2.

<sup>143</sup> Written account by Mr. Parviz Goharriz describing experiences of Jamshid Siyavushi (undated) (on file with IHRDC) at 2.

<sup>144</sup> Written account by Mr. Parviz Goharriz describing experiences of Bahram Afnan (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>145</sup> *Id.*

<sup>146</sup> *Id.*

<sup>147</sup> As members of Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout Iran were arrested or disappeared, reserve members were elected in order to continue the work of the Bahá'í administration in the event that any current members were disappeared or imprisoned.

<sup>148</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 29. Ruhi Jahanpour related the experience of one non-Bahá'í prisoner who recounted that the authorities would sometimes "lose count" of how many lashes they had administered and start again from the beginning. *Id.* at 7.

Mrs. Jahanpour recalls:

Itrat [a non-Bahá'í cellmate of Mrs. Za'irpur] told me that Sister Akhtari [a female warden] came and took Mrs. Za'irpur and Mrs. Za'irpur was lashed. The next morning, Itrat said, Sister Akhtari again showed up at the door and called her name. She said, "Then we knew again they were going to take her for torture. And then when she came back her legs were bloody." Then Sister Akhtari returned the following day. Itrat said that the third day they came for Mrs. Za'irpur, she and her friend Mahnaz started crying uncontrollably because they knew Sister Akhtari was going to take Mrs. Za'irpur for torture again. She said, "we were so upset, she was lashed so harshly."

Mrs. Za'irpur had a disease which caused her to bleed easily, and because of that problem, there was so much blood - her legs were so bloody, and blood was even coming out of her nails and her toes. Therefore Mrs. Za'irpur told [her cellmates] that she would cover her legs with her chador, so that they wouldn't have to look at them. Mrs. Za'irpur told Itrat, "Turn your face because I now have to turn and you don't want to see my legs."

Itrat also said to me that when they were taking her outside of the cell to go to the bathroom (isolated cells don't have their own bathrooms) they had to walk for some time. Itrat said they [that she and Mahnaz] asked if they could help Mrs. Za'irpur, but the Guards didn't let them. Itrat said that she herself had been lashed, and she had seen some political prisoners lashed as well. But she said she had never seen anybody tortured as severely as Mrs. Za'irpur.<sup>149</sup>

Another member of the Shiraz Local Spiritual Assembly, Nusrat Yalda'i, endured similar treatment. She was arrested in October 1982 and was immediately questioned as to the identity of other assembly members. Mrs. Yalda'i refused to reveal their names and was taken to a basement and flogged.<sup>150</sup> She was taken several times within a short period of time to be lashed both on her back and on the soles of her feet.<sup>151</sup> In one session she reportedly passed out but her interrogators continued to flog her, leaving deep cuts on her back.<sup>152</sup> It was also the guards' custom to make prisoners walk after being flogged on the soles of their feet.<sup>153</sup> As Mrs. Yalda'i was a member of the LSA, the authorities were particularly keen to pressure her to denounce her faith in the media and publicly urge Bahá'ís to return to Islam.<sup>154</sup> According to an account by Olya Roohizadegan, Mrs. Yalda'i described one interrogation suffered by the Local Spiritual Assembly members as follows:

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<sup>149</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 29.

<sup>150</sup> Ruhi Jahanpour provides the following description of the flogging process during a previous arrest in February 1982: "They blindfolded me and tied me to a kind of bed, and then they put my feet there and then I heard the sound of the lashes. That is the point at which he asked me if I wanted to remain a Bahá'í or would I deny my faith. I said no and he would say 'It's coming, it's coming...' and would begin the lashing... After a few lashes they would pause for a little bit, because they knew our feet were getting numb and they wanted us to feel the pain. They would continuously say things like: "Do you still want to be a Bahá'í?" and "if you deny your faith, I'll let you go." Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 7. Similarly, Olya Roohizadegan recounts: "There, a female guard removed some of my clothes and then, wearing a thin blouse and a pair of trousers, I was told to lie down on my stomach on a wooden table. She chained my hands and feet to the table and yelled 'Abdu'llah, the prisoner is ready.' Abdu'llah was the guard whose job it was to flog the prisoners." She continued, "Under those painful lashes I screamed out the name of God. Abdu'llah taunted me, saying, 'if Bahá'u'lláh is the truth, why doesn't he rescue you from my hands? Every few strokes he would pause for a few seconds and then continue, so that I would feel the pain more keenly. The female guard kept swearing at me and making crude remarks about my activities in the Faith, and the interrogator stood beside the table, holding my file and encouraging Abdu'llah to hit me harder so I would give up and 'talk', as he put it." OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 122.

<sup>151</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 31.

<sup>152</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 123.

<sup>153</sup> *Id.* at 124, and Jahanpour Statement, *supra* notes 35, at 29.

<sup>154</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 123-124.

The interrogators took the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Shiraz including Mr. Yadu'llah Mahmudnizhad, Azizu'llah Muhibpur, Habibu'llah Hakimi, Jamshid Siyavushi and Dr. Bahram Afnan to the torture chamber and severely tortured them in front of each other. They said that since we were members of the LSA of Shiraz and had elected the committee members, we had to provide them with the names of all of the committee members and other Bahá'ís. They wanted us to go and show them where the Bahá'ís lived.<sup>155</sup>

The ultimate purpose of such sessions was to force the detainees to admit to crimes they had not committed, as Mr. Habibu'llah Hakimi succinctly observed:

To fabricate their case [the interrogators] beat, injured, threatened and terrorized the prisoners to get [the statements] they were seeking... The foundation of their case rested on the international links of the Bahá'í community, which they traced from the Local Assemblies to the National Assembly, from the National Assembly to the Universal House of Justice [in Haifa] and from that [institution] to Israel... Whoever tried to offer reason and logic or provide evidence and tell the truth was sent back to the *Ta'zir* chamber and remorselessly lashed with cables or whips.<sup>156</sup>

## 5.2. Bazpursi – The judicial investigation

After the preliminary investigation at the Sepah was concluded, the prisoners were transferred to Adelabad prison, the main prison in Shiraz. The Bahá'í detainees arrested in November were transferred in small groups at various times between late December 1982 and early January 1983, where they joined most of the Bahá'ís who had been arrested in October 1982.<sup>157</sup> Transfer to Adelabad prison also indicated that a prisoner was moving to the second and third stages of the criminal process: *Bazpursi* and *Dadgah*.

The detainees at Adelabad prison would be transferred to the Revolutionary Court building for interrogation by Court officials. They would be driven to the court house early in the morning and would remain there well into the evening. They would be detained in the *Bazdashthgah*, the Court's notoriously unpleasant holding cell,<sup>158</sup> until they were summoned for an examination.

A junior prosecutor conducted the *Bazpursi* examinations. These individuals were attired in civilian clothing and their identities were never masked. The tone of these interviews was much more official and legalistic. Files that had been compiled by the interrogators at the Sepah were given to the prosecutors for review and further development. The prosecutors increasingly focused on the issue of faith and

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<sup>155</sup> Written account by Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Simin Sabiri (undated) (on file with IHRDC) at 5.

<sup>156</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>157</sup> Ruhi Jahanpour was transferred with Mr. Khadim, Mr. Mazlum, Farhad Bihmardi, Mr. Muqimi, and Mr. Vafa'i around January 10, 1983. Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 40-41. In early January, Izzat Ishraqi, Roya Ishraqi, Shirin Dalvand, Mitra Iravan, Mahshid Nirumand, and Olya Roohizadegan were all transferred to Adelabad; *see id.* at 41. Mr. Za'irpur, Mrs. Avarigan, Tahirih Siyavushi, Mahin Akhlaqi and Firishtih Anvari had already been transferred in a separate group; *id.* at 40.

<sup>158</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 43 describes the *Bazdashthgah* as follows: "It was a horrible, filthy room, with a very dirty floor, and the whole wall was dirty and black. The bathroom couldn't even be used, it was so horrible."

recantation and much less on gathering intelligence on the local Bahá'í community. Their objective was to build a legal case against the detainees; in at least one instance, the prosecutors apparently consulted the lead prosecutor on the Bahá'í case, Prosecutor General Hojjatolislam Seyyed Zia Miremad, for advice and guidance.<sup>159</sup>

Several of the Bahá'ís sent for *Bazpursi* were shown their files. Several files bore the same charge: “Bahá'ísm.”<sup>160</sup> Mrs. Olya Roohizadegan was taken into a room where she was given her criminal file and was ordered to write the answers to the interrogator's questions in it.<sup>161</sup> The cover of the report stated: “You are being prosecuted in the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Justice. If your answers are found to be untrue you will be dealt with under Islamic law and punished accordingly.”<sup>162</sup> Mrs. Roohizadegan seized the opportunity to look through her file to see what sort of information the authorities had gathered about her. She discovered that in addition to being accused of being a Bahá'í and a member of a Bahá'í committee, she was also accused of being an “enemy of God” and “a spy for Zionism and Israel.” Part of the evidence supporting these accusations was a blank El Al ticket to Israel; there was nothing on the ticket to associate it with Mrs. Roohizadegan but a note attached to the file stated that it had been found in her house.<sup>163</sup>

The IHRDC has been able to partially identify only two of the assistant prosecutors that were involved in the criminal proceedings of the Shiraz Bahá'ís: Tulu'i and Misbah. Tulu'i was based at Evin Prison in Tehran where he had gained the nickname “the butcher of the Bahá'ís.”<sup>164</sup> Tulu'i and Misbah dealt with at least two of the Shiraz detainees - Mr. Habibullah Hakimi and another Bahá'í prisoner<sup>165</sup> - who were temporarily transferred to Evin.<sup>166</sup> Misbah was the assistant prosecutor of Branch 54 of the Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office. He had a reputation for corruption and kept the more potentially profitable cases to himself. He was also reputed to both compete and at times collaborate with Tulu'i. Tulu'i was reportedly killed in 1986 during the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>167</sup> Misbah was removed from his post in 1986 and convicted of extortion and embezzlement.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *Id.* at 49-50; Letter by local Bahá'í describing prisoners' trials (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>160</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 43.

<sup>161</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 77.

<sup>162</sup> *Id.* at 77.

<sup>163</sup> *Id.* at 77.

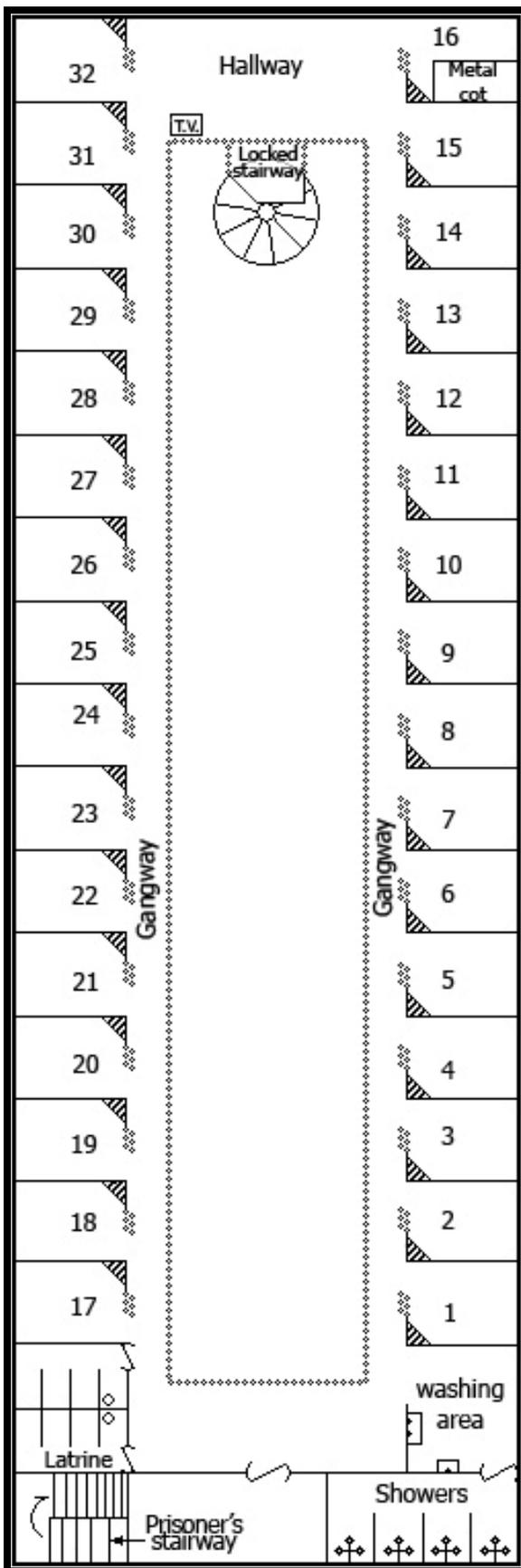
<sup>164</sup> Written account of Mr. Mohammad Reza Hisami describing experiences in Adelabad prison, with supplement by Witness F (dated June 7, 1989) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>165</sup> Written account by Habibu'llah Hakimi describing legal proceedings in court (undated) (on file with IHRDC). The name of the second prisoner is being kept confidential to protect his safety.

<sup>166</sup> *Id.*

<sup>167</sup> *Id.*

<sup>168</sup> *Id.*



## The Women's Ward in Adelabad

The Adelabad prison in Shiraz housed criminals such as murderers and drug dealers along with political prisoners and other prisoners of conscience.

As illustrated, cells lined the two sides of the women's ward. These cells measured 1.5 meters by 2 meters and housed three inmates each. On the third floor (the one pictured here), they were connected by a two-and-a-half foot gangway that was caged by metal bars. Every cell had a concrete floor, one metal cot, one mattress, and one small window that was painted green in order to diminish access to natural light. Each prisoner was given two army blankets.

The women's ward was guarded by female guards during the day. At night, from 10:30 p.m. until the 4:00 a.m. call to prayer, it was guarded by male guards.

Adelabad had three floors. The first floor held prisoners whose crimes were considered the least serious or members of opposition groups who had recanted and expressed remorse for their actions and beliefs. The second floor held prisoners whose crimes were considered more serious. Finally, the third floor housed prisoners accused of the most egregious crimes. This included murderers, drug dealers, political prisoners and Bahá'ís.

Immediately prior to their execution the Bahá'í women were confined in this manner:

Cell 9: Mitra Iravan, Mahshid Nirumand and Shirin Dalvand

Cell 10: Nusrat Yalda'i, Roya and Izzat Ishraqi

Cell 11: Tahirih Siyavushi, Mona and Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad

Cell 12: Zarrin Muqimi, Mahnaz and Jalih Bihmardi

Cell 13: Mihri and Mitra Haqiqatju

Cell 18: Simin Sabiri, Akhtar Sabit and Iran Avarigan

The male prisoners were held in a separate location in the same prison.

### 5.3. The Tehran delegation

The fall of 1982 was marked by growing public unease at the seemingly arbitrary exercise of power by the revolutionary authorities. On December 15, 1982, Ayatollah Khomeini responded to public sentiment by issuing an eight-point decree defining the extent and limit of certain powers vested in government institutions, and in particular the judicial authorities.<sup>169</sup> The decree, amongst other things, included a prohibition on arrests and the confiscation of property without a court order, and restricted the authorities' ability to search private homes.<sup>170</sup> Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Decree fell to the Head of the Supreme Court, Ayatollah Mousavi Ardebili, and the Prime Minister, Mir Hussein Mousavi.<sup>171</sup> Ayatollah Ardebili and Prime Minister Mousavi established the Committee for the Implementation of the Imam's Eight Point Decree<sup>172</sup> which in turn dispatched delegations to provinces throughout the country to hear public complaints.<sup>173</sup>

In January 1983 three officials from Tehran were sent to Shiraz to investigate the treatment of prisoners in the city and inspect local prisons. It is not clear whether this was solely the initiative of the Eight Point Decree Committee or, in part, a response to pressure from Shiraz families like the Afnans who had bombarded officials in the capital with letters about their relatives' plight in the months after the October and November arrests.

The Tehran delegation consisted of a representative from each branch of the government: the Judiciary, the Ministry of Interior, and the *Majlis*.<sup>174</sup> Although the families' appeals had described the situation of the Shiraz detainees in detail, there is no evidence that the Tehran delegation took any substantive action on the prisoners' behalf.<sup>175</sup> However, their visit did coincide with the temporary release on bail of some of the female Bahá'í detainees arrested in November 1982 like Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour, Ms. Mino Anvari and Mrs. Olya Roohizadegan.<sup>176</sup> These women had just begun the judicial investigation (*Bazpursi*) phase of their detention.<sup>177</sup>

Ms. Jahanpour was being interviewed by one of the assistant prosecutors about her activities for the Bahá'í community on January 15 when he suddenly told her that if her family could come up with 50,000 Toman (approximately \$1,150 in 1982) she would be released on bail. The lawyer added: "Don't think that Bahá saved you - but you have been subjected to Islamic kindness and will be released. The Prosecutor General of Iran has ordered us to release you."<sup>178</sup> Ms. Jahanpour was not released

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<sup>169</sup> See MENASHRI, *supra* note 117, at 271-272.

<sup>170</sup> See *Farman-i Hasht Madhiyyih Imam Khomeini Barayih Ta'min-i Amniyat-i Ijtima'i va Qaza'iyyih Mardum* [Imam Khomeini's 8 Point Decree to Provide Social and Judicial Security for the People], KAYHAN, 25/9/1361 (December 16, 1982) [hereinafter "8 Point Decree"].

<sup>171</sup> *Id.* However, Point 7 of the decree specified that the aforementioned protections would not apply to cases involving conspiracies and groups who oppose Islam and the Islamic Republic. *Id.*

<sup>172</sup> The members of this committee included: Hojjatolislam Muhaqqeq Damad (the state comptroller), Hojjatolislam Muhammad Aqa Emami-Kashani (head of the administrative courts), Nateq Nuri (the Minister of the Interior), and Aqazadeh (the Minister for Executive Affairs). MENASHRI, *supra* note 117, at 273.

<sup>173</sup> *Id.*

<sup>174</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 52.

<sup>175</sup> On February 11, 1983, marking the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Islamic Revolution" of Iran, Khomeini issued a decree for amnesty of the prisoners requesting that "the judicial officials and the committee for the implementation of the decree must process the prisoners' cases in a speedy manner and in general the policy should be to treat the [prisoners] with amnesty and compassion, except for the corrupting [ones] and members of the corrupt groups." See *Payam-i Muhimm-i Imam bih Dawlat, Majlis, Hawzahayyih Ilmiyyih, Shawrayih Aliyyih Qaza'i, Niruhayyih Musallah Va Mardum dar Aqaz-i Panjumin Sal-i Inqilab* [Important message of Imam to the Government, Majlis, Religious Seminaries, Supreme Judicial Council, the Armed Forces and the People on the Fifth Anniversary of the Revolution], KAYHAN, 23/11/1361 (February 12, 1983) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>176</sup> See, e.g., Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 51-52; OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 194.

<sup>177</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 43, 45. Different prisoners went through the three stages at different, sometimes overlapping, times. As Ruhi Jahanpour explains, "They were mixing us up between *bazpursi* and *dadghah*. For instance, they called several of us, that Saturday morning... to go for *bazpursi*. They called [others] to go for *dadghah* on the same day."

<sup>178</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 45.

immediately, she was brought back to the Court the following day together with Ms. Shirin Dalvand, and the women were told that their families would now be required to post 700,000 Toman (approximately \$16,090) in bail. Ms. Jahanpour's family was able to raise the money quickly and arranged her release. Ms. Dalvand's grandmother was unable to move so quickly. When she finally presented the required sum a couple of days later, the assistant prosecutor handling her granddaughter's case told her she was too late. When she complained that the other women had already been released, she was told that they would soon be re-arrested.<sup>179</sup>

As soon as the Tehran delegation left Shiraz, the Revolutionary Court dispatched the Revolutionary Guards to the paroled prisoners' homes to take them back into custody.<sup>180</sup> Ms. Ruhi Jahanpour, Ms. Mino Anvari, and Mrs. Olya Roohizadegan all seized the opportunity presented by their temporary parole to flee Shiraz and eventually escaped the country. Ms. Shirin Dalvand, who was unable to secure bail, would ultimately be executed.

#### 5.4. Dadgah – The court

Those prisoners who failed to recant or gain bail during the *Bazpursi* phase had their cases referred to the *Dadgah* or court. The *Dadgah* was conducted by Religious Magistrate Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, who had come to the Revolutionary Court in Shiraz after being transferred from Bandar Abbas in March 1982. When he finally met them in the courtroom, Qaza'i told "active Bahá'ís" that they had just two options: "*Ya Islam, ya idam*" – Islam or execution.<sup>181</sup>

On the same day that the November group went through *Bazpursi*, Mrs. Tahirih Siyavushi, Mrs. Firishtih Anvari, Ms. Mahin Akhlaqi and Ms. Mahshid Irfanian completed *Dadgah* (court). Mrs. Siyavushi described her appearance before Hojjatolislam Qaza'i to another detainee:

When she came back, I asked, "Tahirih, what happened? The judge didn't have time for you?" She said, "Yeah, he did." I said, "Well, what happened?" She said, "Nothing, he asked me about my name and my family name and said 'Charge, Crime: Bahá'ísm.' And suddenly the *hakim-i shar'* [Religious Magistrate], who at the time was Qaza'i, said, 'your verdict is execution.'" Exactly this sentence. Tahirih told him, "I have only been a member of the Deepening Committee, and only for three months." The *hakim-i shar'* answered, "I don't care that you were a member or for how long. What is important is that you are a Bahá'í. Don't think that I want to execute you, when it is in fact a verse of Koran that says you must be executed. First members of the institutions and then the regular Bahá'ís."<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> *Id.* at 50-51.

<sup>180</sup> *Id.* at 51-52.

<sup>181</sup> See Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 8; Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 43-44; Arjumandi Statement, *supra* note 110, at 1. Another variation of this statement was "*Ya idam, ya irshad*" (execution or guidance); see footnote 182 below.

<sup>182</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 43; see also Arjumandi Statement, *supra* note 110, at 1-2 (stating "Tahirih told our mother that when she was interrogated, the interrogator or the judge in Shiraz whose name was Qada'i, [Qaza'i] had said that they were sentenced to death, *Ya Idam ya Irshad* (death or 'guidance': spiritual instruction in Islamic orthodoxy). If they did not recant they would be killed. After this visit, as my mother argued with the Judge, he said, 'It is true I have written their sentence, and they are sentenced to death, unless they recant.' My mother told him that, if being a Bahá'í is a crime, then all us should be killed, and he responded that ultimately this would be the case, but as everyone could not be killed at once, the annihilation must happen gradually." Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 16 notes: "I later heard from Hidayat Siyavushi's mother that the *hakim-i shar'* [Religious Magistrate] had told Hidayat during his trial that it was their goal to arrest all the Bahá'ís, or at least arrest enough, and kill them, and terrorize them, so that the community would give up. Then Hidayat had said, 'Why don't you then announce it and as[k] all the Bahá'ís to gather somewhere and kill them all at the same time? And the *hakim-i shar'*, I'm not sure which one it was, told him, "Well, we can't do that because if we do that, then we will face international pressure and reaction. Therefore we are going to do one at a time, that way nobody could do anything about it."

Mrs. Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad had been arrested in January 1983 when she visited the Court to follow up on the case of her daughter, Mona.<sup>183</sup> She was rushed straight to the trial phase and when she was brought before Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, he asked her a series of questions regarding the tenets of the Bahá'í faith, and pressed her to recant:

When I entered the room, I said, "Salaam," and noticed that the typist typed the word. I therefore realized that whatever I said was going to be recorded in my file. It was clear that I had to sit on the chair that was placed before the judge... I put my hand on the chair and stood before the judge. He looked at me and instructed me to sit. I said, "Ha?," pretending that I had not heard him. He became very happy and looked at the typist saying, "Do you know who she is? She is the wife of the man who spoke very eloquently and wanted to teach us [the Bahá'í Faith]." He laughed a sarcastic laugh and ordered me again to sit. I sat down.

He looked through my file and asked, "You're from a Zoroastrian background, right?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Why did you leave such a good religion as the Faith of Zoroaster and convert to Bahá'ísm?" I told him, "Because it was my heart's desire to do that." He said, "This is not a matter for the heart! If, right now, you declare that you are a Zoroastrian, I will free you. I told him that I would not do that, and he said, "We respect the Zoroastrians. They participate in our demonstrations, and if you were to claim to be Zoroastrian right now, I would immediately issue your release papers." I responded, "Sir, I will not convert to the Zoroastrian religion." He asked, "Why?" and I said, "Because you want to take me back 2500 years. I wish you had asked me to convert to Islam. I would have liked it better." Then he said, "So convert to Islam" and I responded, "Now you want to take me back 1400 years; no sir, I will neither become a Zoroastrian nor a Muslim, so what is my sentence?" He said with anger, "Death."

As God is my witness, I became indescribably happy and said in a loud voice, "I am not worthy of martyrdom, but it would make me very happy if you were to execute me. As God is my witness, it will make me immeasurably happy." He said, "You will be happy?" And I responded, "Yes." He then said, "We are not here to make you happy; do you know what your sentence is?" I said "No." He said, "We will kill your husband, Yadu'llah Mahmudnizhad. We will kill your daughter, Mona Mahmudnizhad, and you can go home and mourn their loss." He shouted at me and ordered me to sit. He went through my file, wrote something in it, and then asked a guard to take me away.<sup>184</sup>

Both Mrs. Mahmudnizhad's husband and daughter would ultimately be executed just as the judge had promised. Her daughter would be the youngest victim of the Shiraz executions.

In her appearance before Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, Ms. Simin Sabiri, the twenty-three-year-old member of the Bahá'í community's Education Committee, found herself facing sixteen distinct charges:

1. Being Bahá'í;
2. Active membership in Bahá'í Administration;
3. Confessing to being an assistant [to the Auxiliary Board];
4. Membership in the Bahá'í Education Committee of Shiraz;
5. Membership in the Youth Committee;
6. Attending classes for Bahá'í children;
7. Teaching classes for Bahá'í children;
8. Donating to the Bahá'í fund;
9. Acting as a liaison between local families and the LSA of Shiraz;
10. Participation in deepening classes<sup>185</sup> in Shiraz;



<sup>183</sup> See Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 6, 19.

<sup>184</sup> March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 67, at 41-42.

<sup>185</sup> In these classes, Bahá'ís gather together to study and gain a deeper understanding of the Bahá'í writings.

11. Acting as Secretary of the Bahá'í Education Committee;
12. Participation in Bahá'í nineteen-day feasts;
13. Hosting a nineteen day feast;
14. Delivering messages from the LSA of Shiraz to local Bahá'ís;
15. Not being married;
16. Refusing to recant.<sup>186</sup>

Ms. Sabiri was sentenced to death. Slowly, one by one, all the Bahá'í detainees from the winter 1982 raids that had been processed through *Bazpursi* to *Dadgah* were either sentenced to death, recanted, or released on bail.

### *Recantations*

Not all the Shiraz detainees were able to resist the overwhelming pressure placed on them to convert to Islam. Mrs. Firishtih Anvari was told at her trial that she faced execution and the confiscation of property unless she recanted. Hojjatolislam Qaza'i saw that she was wavering. He agreed to release Mrs. Anvari on a bail of 500,000 Toman (approximately \$11,494) dismissing her with the comment: "If after a month you accept [Islam], you're going to be free, otherwise, execution with confiscation of property."<sup>187</sup>

Mrs. Anvari's children were then brought in to plead with her to return home. Her interrogators encouraged her to submit saying, "come on, if you just deny your faith they'll let you go and you'll be with your children." Finally succumbing, Mrs. Anvari agreed to recant and was immediately released.<sup>188</sup> Mrs. Anvari's husband, Dr. Mohammad Anvari, had also been detained with his wife in November 1982. He too recanted when he was told that the Revolutionary Guards were harassing his wife to marry them because now that she was no longer a Bahá'í, her existing marriage was considered null and void.<sup>189</sup>

Both Mrs. Firishtih Anvari and Mr. Shahram Qura'i, another detainee who succumbed to the constant pressure and recanted, were exploited by the prison guards in an attempt to 'guide' the other Bahá'ís detainees back to Islam. The Bahá'í prisoners were summoned to watch a closed-circuit television broadcast in which the two talked about their decision and encouraged the other detainees to recant as well.<sup>190</sup>

## 5.5. Khabar-i Junub article

Notice of the conviction of twenty-two local Bahá'ís and the Revolutionary Court's verdict of execution in all twenty-two cases would typically have been sent to the *Sitad-i-Khabari* of the *Sepah-i Pasdaran* (the Revolutionary Guard's internal news agency) for internal distribution. However, in February 1983 details of these sentences were sent to the local newspaper in Shiraz, *Khabar-i Junub*, by mistake and the newspaper ran with the story.<sup>191</sup>

The article which appeared in *Khabar-i Junub* did not list the names of the twenty-two Bahá'ís concerned. As a result, there remains some doubt over exactly who was named in this court order. The

<sup>186</sup> Written account by Olya Roohizadegan describing experiences of Simin Sabiri (undated) (on file with IHRDC) at 11.

<sup>187</sup> Jahanpour Statement, *supra* note 35, at 44.

<sup>188</sup> *Id.*

<sup>189</sup> OLYA'S STORY, *supra* note 36, at 112. Firishtih had also reportedly been forced to watch other prisoners being whipped. *Id.* at 110.

<sup>190</sup> Written account by Witness D (dated October 1, 1983) (on file with IHRDC) at 4-5.

<sup>191</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 8.

IHRDC has identified twenty-two members of the local Shiraz community who lost their lives in the first six months of 1983. Twenty-one were executed, and one more, Mr. Ahmad Ali Thabit-Sarvistani, died in prison after months of abuse. The Center believes it is reasonable to conclude that it was the original intention of the Revolutionary Court that all twenty-two be executed for their refusal to abandon their faith.

Following up on the execution story on February 22, 1983, *Khabar-i Junub* published an exclusive interview with Hojjatolislam Qaza'i under the tag line: "*Religious Magistrate of Shiraz: 'I warn the Bahá'ís to come to the Bosom of Islam.'*" In the interview Qaza'i explains the Court's intent in pursuing the Bahá'í case:

I have to say that the great nation of Iran which is following and implementing the teachings of the Imam's, God willing, will fulfill the prayer of Prophet Noah [who said]: "...Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers; for surely if Thou leave them they will lead astray the servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful children." The uprising of the Iranian people was based on the ideology of the Koran. [The Iranians] have pledged, with God's help, to establish the government of God on earth. Hence, they can't abide the deviant Bahá'ís who are the puppets of Satan and those serving Satan, the super-powers and their agents such as the Universal House of Justice of Israel.<sup>192</sup>

Qaza'i rejected the idea that the Bahá'ís had been arrested merely because of their faith, asserting, somewhat counterintuitively, that it was only the active Bahá'ís that had been arrested.<sup>193</sup> Qaza'i added that the Iranian constitution had criminalized Bahá'í activities such as attending gatherings and meetings as a political threat to the Islamic Republic. He warned Bahá'ís of the likely consequences of staying loyal to their faith:

I'm going to use this opportunity and ask all the fair and wise Bahá'ís to come to the bosom of dear Islam and wash themselves of the shame of following the Bahá'í Faith that is invented by the colonizing powers. By doing such a courageous act, that is fighting the firmly rooted opinions and behaviors of the Bahá'ís... they will save themselves. They should repent from Bahá'ism, which is reasonably and logically condemned, before it is too late. Otherwise, soon a day shall come when the Nation of Islam will do to the Bahá'ís, who are showing a more dangerous image and follow satanic religious nonsense, as they did to the Mojahedin. [The Nation of Islam will] do its religious duty and the Bahá'ís should know that they are not stronger than the Mojahedin and the Nation of Hezbollah is not powerless in uprooting them.<sup>194</sup>

After the publication of the *Khabar-i Junub* articles, family members of the remaining Bahá'í detainees descended on Prosecutor General Hojjatolislam Seyyed Zia Miremad's office demanding to know whether or not the articles were true, and if their loved ones had indeed been sentenced to death. One family member recalled:

I remember quite clearly that [Hojjatolislam Miremad] came out of his office, moved his *Aba* [cloak] around and said, "this sentence is not just for these twenty-two people, all the Bahá'ís in this prison have the same sentence: '*ya Islam, ya idam*' (Islam or death). If you want to help your families, I will grant you visitation rights so that you can meet with

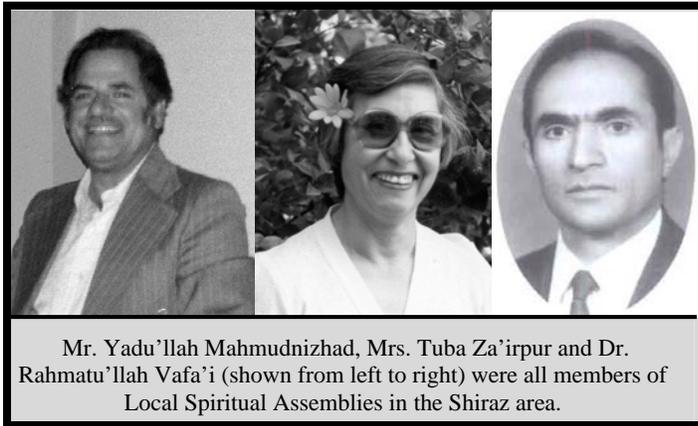
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<sup>192</sup> See *Guft-u-Guyih Ikhtisasiyyih Khabar Ba Hojjatolislam Qaza'i Hakim-i Shar' va Ra'is-i Dadgah-i Inqilab-i Shiraz, Hakim-i Shar'-i Shiraz: Bih Bahá'íyan Tazakkur Midaham Bih Daman-i Islam Biyayand* [Exclusive Interview of Khabar with Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, the Religious Magistrate and Head of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz; the Religious Magistrate of Shiraz: "I warn the Bahá'ís to Come to the Bosom of Islam"], *KHABAR-I JUNUB*, No. 782, 3/12/1361 (February 22, 1983) [hereinafter "February 22, 1983 *KHABAR-I JUNUB* article"] [attached as Appendix 1].

<sup>193</sup> *Id.* (citing Qaza'i as stating "the Bahá'ís are not arrested merely for being Bahá'í, only the active members of the establishment, who are in direct or indirect contact with the Universal House of Justice... if Bahá'ís were to be arrested merely for being Bahá'ís, all the Bahá'ís in Shiraz should have been arrested by now, which is not the case, and only a handful have been arrested for the aforementioned crimes who will be punished depending on their individual crimes.")

<sup>194</sup> *Id.*

them and guide them to recant their beliefs.” So it was in this manner that their sentences were issued, but we could not believe that they would carry it out.<sup>195</sup>



Mr. Yadu'llah Mahmudnizhad, Mrs. Tuba Za'irpur and Dr. Rahmatu'llah Vafa'i (shown from left to right) were all members of Local Spiritual Assemblies in the Shiraz area.

In public, however, Hojjatolislam Miremad fell back on a more familiar regime narrative. In an interview with a local Shiraz television station he stated that the arrests had not been prompted by the detainees' religious beliefs but by their alleged political activities:

Bahá'ís and others like them say, “we don't participate in politics and accept the Islamic Republic,” ... but we see that they are in action doing counter-revolutionary things. We don't and will never arrest anyone for the charge of being Bahá'í.<sup>196</sup>

On March 12, 1982, LSA members Mr. Yadu'llah Mahmudnizhad, Dr Rahmatu'llah Vafa'i and Mrs. Tuba Za'irpur were all hanged in Shiraz's Chawgun Square. The bodies of the three Bahá'ís were buried in a common grave at the Bahá'í cemetery.<sup>197</sup>

## 5.6. International protests

The international community was first made aware of the impending execution of the Shiraz Bahá'ís by the *Khabar-i Junub* articles. The global Bahá'í community began an intensive lobbying effort to try and reverse the Shiraz sentences. Letters of appeal were sent by Bahá'í National Assemblies around the world, and by many individuals, to persons of influence both inside and outside Iran.

On May 17, 1983, U.S. President Ronald Reagan, responded to the Bahá'í campaign by making a plea for clemency to the Iranian government on behalf of the twenty-two Shiraz Bahá'ís.<sup>198</sup> Shortly after President Reagan delivered this speech, an announcement was made by the prison authorities over the public address system stating that with the American “President's defense of the Bahá'ís, [in essence] a document was signed declaring that Bahá'ís are indeed political spies.”<sup>199</sup> A few days after this announcement, Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad was confronted by two masked interrogators who asked her: “Now that the President of the United States has risen to your defense and has thus proven that you are indeed spies, do you still claim that you are not?” She responded that due to the grave injustice committed against Bahá'ís, all the people of the world would come to their defense, not just the American President.<sup>200</sup>

On May 29, 1983, at the celebration of the birth of the Imam Mahdi, one of the most important dates in the Shi'a calendar, and before an assembly of military and government officials, Ayatollah Khomeini gave his response to President Reagan. In a wide-ranging speech on foreign policy issues, Khomeini rejected western humanitarian concerns regarding Iran as being without foundation. Khomeini then addressed President Reagan's defense of the Shiraz Bahá'ís directly, commenting that some “simple-

<sup>195</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 8.

<sup>196</sup> Transcript of Hojjatolislam Seyyed Zia Miremad's interview with the Shiraz TV Station on February 23 or 24, 1983 (on file with IHRDC). This transcript was taken by a local Bahá'í.

<sup>197</sup> Written account by Witness D (dated October 1, 1983) (on file with IHRDC) at 8.

<sup>198</sup> The full text of President Reagan's statement can be found in: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, Public Papers of Ronald Reagan, 1983 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1956-), pages 1755-1757.

<sup>199</sup> March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 67, at 44.

<sup>200</sup> *Id.* at 44.

minded” people might have hitherto believed that the Bahá’ís were just practicing their religion – “be it that their belief is corrupted” - but that by pleading their case, President Reagan had in fact sealed their fate.

Were these people not spies, you [Reagan and his supporters] would not be raising your voices! You [Reagan and his supporters] are complaining because they are a group that benefit you... We know the U.S. and that their sense of ‘humanitarianism’ is not suddenly stirred to make such a fuss for twenty-two Bahá’ís who are, as they say, ‘captured’ in Iran, and that they are not making such a ruckus and pleading to the whole world to answer the cry of these people due to their ‘humanitarianism.’<sup>201</sup>

Khomeini concluded by saying that if there had not been evidence to prove that the Bahá’ís were western spies, President Reagan’s plea for their lives was sufficient evidence in itself to warrant their execution:<sup>202</sup>

Bahá’ís are not a religious group, they are a political party; a party which was previously supported by Britain, and now is being supported by the U.S. These people are spies... If they are not spies, well they are like many other people who have deviant beliefs; such as communists.<sup>203</sup>

The speech was published in the widely circulated national newspaper *Kayhan*.

## 5.7. Istitabih – ‘Recant or die’

The Bahá’í detainees held in Adelabad prison frequently shared cells with prisoners from the general prison population, which included both political prisoners and serious criminal offenders. In the first week of June 1983, the prison authorities sequestered the female Bahá’í prisoners from the other prisoners. Mrs. Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad, who had remained in the prison after her appearance before Hojjatolislam Qaza’i, suspected that they were being isolated to prevent the other prisoners from relaying details of their final days to the outside world.<sup>204</sup>

On June 12, 1983, Prosecutor General Hojjatolislam Miremad visited the condemned prisoners with a group of female and male Revolutionary Guards, along with prison deputies and officials. He stood before four of the cells where the Bahá’ís were being held and ordered the head of the ward, a Mr. Turab-pur, to start the final procedure known as *Istitabih*.<sup>205</sup> According to the Iranian Government’s interpretation of Islamic law, a prisoner holding heretical beliefs was given four opportunities to recant and repent prior to execution and thus save his or her life.<sup>206</sup> The condemned Bahá’í detainees were all extended this same opportunity.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> See *Imam-i Ummat dar Didar-i bah Mas’ulin-i Kishvar bih Munasibat-i Milad-i ba Sa’adat-i Imam-i Zaman (AJ): Mavara’yih Taz’if-i Urganhayih in Jumhuri Dastha-i Ast kih Gardanandih Hastand* [Imam of the nation in a visit with the authorities of the country on the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of the Imam of Time: There are hands masterminding the attempts to weaken this Republic], KAYHAN, 8/3/1362 [May 29, 1983] (on file with IHRDC) [hereinafter “May 29, 1983 KAYHAN article”] [attached as Appendix 2].

<sup>202</sup> *Id.* The article cites Ayatollah Khomeini as stating: “If we had no evidence to prove they [the Bahá’ís] were U.S. spies, the mere concern expressed about them by Reagan suffices as evidence and similarly if we had no evidence that the Tudeh party [members] are spies, the mere concern expressed about them by the Soviets suffices as evidence.” *Id.*

<sup>203</sup> *Id.*

<sup>204</sup> March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 67, at 22.

<sup>205</sup> Written account of Mr. Mohammad Reza Hisami, with supplement by Witness F (dated June 7, 1989) (on file with IHRDC). The prisoners’ accounts variously refer to Mr. Turab-pur as the head of the ward and the head of the prison. See, e.g., Written account by Olya Roohizadegan entitled “Accounts of the imprisonment of the 10 Martyrs of Shiraz”, dated December 3, 1985 (on file with IHRDC); Anvari Statement, *supra* note 49, at 10.

<sup>206</sup> See, e.g. the online encyclopedia of Iranian Shi’a terminology (available in Persian at [http://www.al-shia.com/html/far/books/maaref\\_maarif/alef/0042.htm#link128](http://www.al-shia.com/html/far/books/maaref_maarif/alef/0042.htm#link128)) (accessed August 11, 2007). This source explains that *Istitabih* is an expression used by Islamic jurists to describe the act of “asking for *Tawbah* (penitence)” from a National Apostate (a category of apostate). Some scholars believe that asking for penitence from a National Apostate is religiously mandatory.

You have to pass through four stages of guidance to become Muslims, otherwise you will be executed. From tomorrow, two hours of silence will be announced every day. The prison will become your university, and you all have to study.<sup>208</sup>



Izzat and Inayatu'llah Ishraqi and their daughter Roya were executed within two days of each other. Roya was in her second year of veterinary school.

On June 13, the female Bahá'í prisoners were summoned one by one for their *Istitabih* sessions.<sup>209</sup> Ms. Zarrin Muqimi and Mrs. Izzat Ishraqi were taken to an office on the first floor of the prison for their *Istitabih* sessions. Each session took about five minutes and they were asked to put their decision not to recant in writing.<sup>210</sup> Each time they returned to their cell, they would indicate to the other detainees with their fingers which of the four guidance sessions they were on.<sup>211</sup> When the two women were called for their final *Istitabih* session, they resigned themselves to their fate and said their good-byes. Once the session was over Ms. Muqimi waited outside the office expecting to be taken immediately for execution. Instead, one of the guards told her: "It's not that easy. These verdicts must go to Tehran."<sup>212</sup>

Later the same day Ms. Simin Sabiri, Ms. Akhtar Thabit, Mrs. Iran Avarigan,<sup>213</sup> Ms. Roya Ishraqi, Ms. Shirin Dalvand and Ms. Mahshid Nirumand were all summoned to undergo the *Istitabih* process. Each woman signed four written statements to the effect that they would not recant. Of the condemned women, only Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad and Mrs. Nusrat Yalda'i were not summoned. Mona's mother, Mrs. Farkhundih Mahmudnizhad, was released from Adelabad prison that evening believing her daughter had been granted at least a temporary reprieve.

Six of the condemned male detainees – Mr. Jamshid Siyavushi, Mr. Bahram Yalda'i, Dr. Bahram Afnan, Mr. Abdul-Husayn Azadi, Mr. Kurush Haqbin and Mr. Inayatu'llah Ishraqi – began *Istitabih* sessions of their own on June 14. They faced Hojjatolislam Qaza'i's ultimatum – "*Islam ya idam*" (Islam or Execution) – for the last time. All six men refused to recant.<sup>214</sup>

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According to this view, the Religious Magistrate must give the National Apostate ample opportunity to repent; according to some scholars, nine days is adequate opportunity, while others believe the opportunity should be as long as the amount of time necessary for the apostate to convert. Upon conversion, the apostate's penitence is accepted and all of his possessions are returned to him. Penitence is accepted when the apostate has expressed remorse for his previous actions and has accepted any of the pillars (of Islam) he had previously denied. If an apostate repents three times and each time subsequently reneges, upon the fourth instance, his penitence is no longer accepted and his execution order is issued (see source cited above).

<sup>207</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 10.

<sup>208</sup> March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 67, at 24.

<sup>209</sup> Although they had been told by Qaza'i that they were to go through the repentance session when they were sentenced in January, they had not yet attended any of the sessions.

<sup>210</sup> Written account of Mr. Mohammad Reza Hisami, with supplement by Witness F (dated June 7, 1989) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>211</sup> March 28, 2001 Mahmudnizhad Account, *supra* note 67, at 25.

<sup>212</sup> Written account of Mr. Mohammad Reza Hisami, with supplement by Witness F (dated June 7, 1989) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>213</sup> Mrs. Avarigan was the only one of the women to progress through the *Istitabih* process without recanting and yet escape execution.

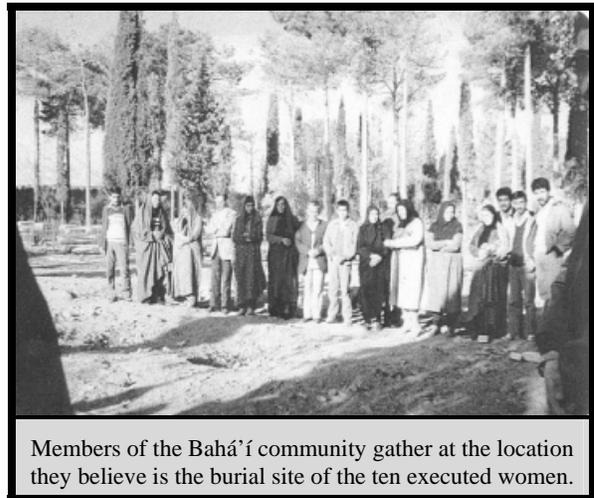
<sup>214</sup> Written account by Mr. Parviz Goharriz describing experiences of Bahram Afnan (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

## 5.8. The June executions

On June 15 the condemned men received their last visit from their families.<sup>215</sup> The following day, on Thursday June 16, 1983, at about 4 p.m., they were summoned and the sentence of their execution was read to them. They returned to their cell and distributed what belongings they had in the prison to their friends. Mr. Jamshid Siyavushi, Mr. Bahram Yalda'i, Dr. Bahram Afnan, Mr. Abdul-Husayn Azadi, Mr. Kurush Haqbin and Mr. Inayatu'llah Ishraqi were then taken to Chawgun Square and hanged a few hours after the evening prayer.<sup>216</sup>

The condemned women received their last visit from their families at 5 p.m. on the afternoon of Saturday June 18. The visit lasted for about 15 minutes.<sup>217</sup> As they made their way back to their cell with the other female detainees, Revolutionary Guards blocked their path.<sup>218</sup> The head of the prison called out the names of Ms. Zarrin Muqimi, Ms. Shirin Dalvand, Ms. Roya Ishraqi, Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad, Ms. Simin Sabiri, Mrs. Izzat Ishraqi, Ms. Akhtar Thabit, Mrs. Tahirih Siyavushi, Ms. Mahshid Nirumand and Mrs. Nusrat Yalda'i. The other prisoners were sent back to their cells. The ten women were then loaded into a

minibus and driven away from the prison. At some point on the evening of June 18 or early morning of June 19, 1983 – accounts differ – the ten women were hanged in Chawgun Square. According to the only eyewitness yet to come forward, the driver of the minivan that took them to the square, the women were hanged one by one.<sup>219</sup> Ms. Mona Mahmudnizhad, the youngest of all the detainees, was the last to be hanged.<sup>220</sup>



Members of the Bahá'í community gather at the location they believe is the burial site of the ten executed women.

<sup>215</sup> Written account of Mr. Mohammad Reza Hisami, with supplement by Witness F (dated June 7, 1989) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>216</sup> Written account by Mr. Parviz Goharriz describing experiences of Bahram Afnan (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>217</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 10.

<sup>218</sup> Written account of Mr. Mohammad Reza Hisami, with supplement by Witness F (dated June 7, 1989) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>219</sup> Most accounts of the women's execution place the execution on the evening of June 18. However, according to one account received by the IHRDC, the execution may not have taken place until early the next morning. A non-Bahá'í prisoner relayed that while she was in solitary confinement at the *Sepah-i Shiraz*, Mrs. Yalda'i and a young woman whose description matched that of Roya Ishraqi were brought into her prison cell on the last night they were alive. Mrs. Yalda'i told her, "we are ten women, this is our situation and they are going to hang us tonight." The non-Bahá'í prisoner recounted that in the early morning the Revolutionary Guards came and took them away. If this account is accurate, the ten women would likely have all been held briefly at the Sepah and executed early on the morning of June 19. Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 11.

<sup>220</sup> Letter of Katayun to Mrs. Balazadih, dated January 24, 1984 (on file with IHRDC).

## 6. Aftermath

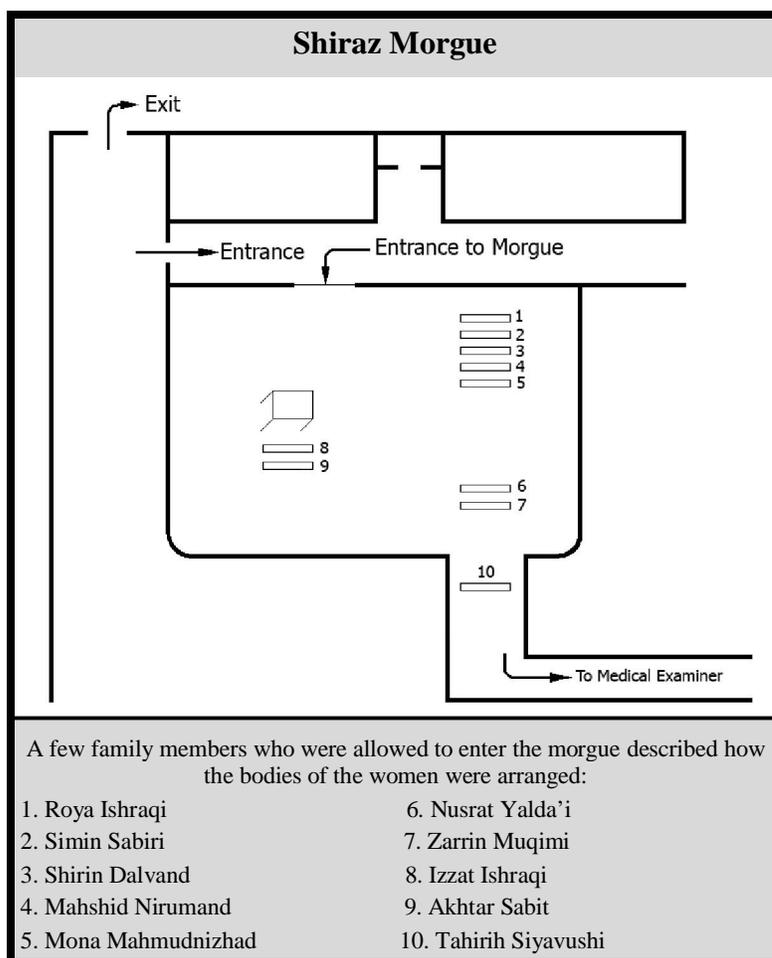
### 6.1. Identifying the bodies

After the executions, the victims' bodies were transferred to the *Sardkhanihiyyih Pizishkiyih Qanuni* [Medical Examiner's morgue] located near *Shahrdari* Square in Shiraz. A short while after the execution of the male detainees, some of the family members managed to enter the morgue to see their fathers, brothers and sons for the last time. They found eight bodies in the morgue:

Four bodies were placed face up and four were face down. Two of them were not Bahá'ís, but had been executed the same day. The mark of the noose was obvious on their necks.<sup>221</sup>

When the families returned later to claim the bodies for burial they were told that the bodies of the men had now been replaced by the bodies of the executed women. This was the first time anyone in the Shiraz Bahá'í community was made aware of the women's execution. The families were initially unable to find out what had happened to the men's bodies. Later the community was informed by a nurse, who had once worked with Dr. Bahram Afnan and was sympathetic to the plight of the families, that the men's bodies had been sent to Sa'di hospital in Shiraz. Officials had given the bodies to the medical school to be used as cadavers, without the permission of the families.<sup>222</sup>

The women's bodies were brought to the morgue sometime between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. on June 19. Mrs. Mahmudnizhad, who had only been released from prison six days earlier, was one of the first to arrive at the morgue. The guard on duty initially refused to let her in because the Prosecutor General, Hojjatolislam Seyyed Zia Miremad, was inside inspecting the bodies.<sup>223</sup> After pleading with the guard, Mrs. Mahmudnizhad and some other family members were allowed to wait.<sup>224</sup> When she was finally admitted, Mrs. Mahmudnizhad walked around the morgue and identified all ten women's bodies. After she had returned to the body of her daughter Mona, she was approached by the morgue guard:



<sup>221</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 13.

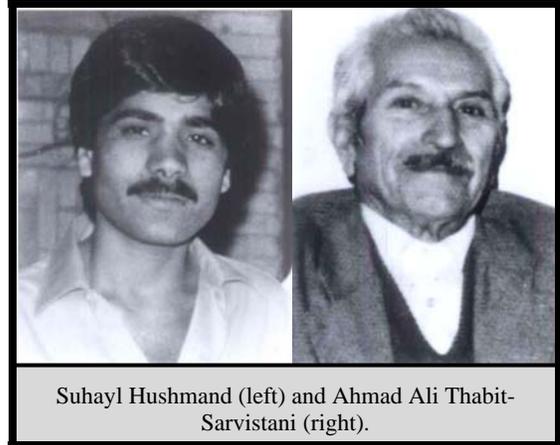
<sup>222</sup> *Id.*

<sup>223</sup> Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 27.

<sup>224</sup> *Id.*

I thought he was going to scold me for not staying in one place and roaming around. He said, “which one is your child?” I showed him Mona. He started crying and said, “please forgive us. We are appointed and have no authority. We are always faced with such scenes but none were as moving as this one. Please forgive me. Please.” My tongue was tied so I hugged him and kissed his cheeks. He had a long beard. He calmed down like a child. So I told him again, “if you knew why our kids have fallen like this, you would worship the dust under their feet.” He said nothing.<sup>225</sup>

A few hours later, the bodies of the women were placed in an ambulance. A local youth followed the ambulance on his motorcycle. The bodies were taken to the Bahá’í cemetery, known as the *Gulistan-i Javid*. The young man got permission to go up on the roof of a neighboring house and watched the officials bury the bodies. All ten women were buried in the clothes they were wearing when they died. Each was placed in an individual shallow grave close to one another. After the bodies were buried, the officials used a bulldozer to cover the site with soil, presumably to disguise the graves’ location. This entire process took about half an hour.<sup>226</sup>



Within a week of the executions family members of the deceased began to hold memorial gatherings, even though they had been instructed not to by the local authorities. Flower bouquets were delivered anonymously to the homes of all ten female victims.

One day Shirin Dalvand’s grandmother was walking down the street when a young soldier came forward and greeted her. Shirin’s grandma asks him how he knows her. He replies, “I know all of you, you are Shirin’s grandma.” At that point she grabs his hand and asks, “How do you know Shirin? How do you know my grandchild?” The soldier told her, “I was the driver of the same minibus that took your children to be executed and I have lots to say but I just wanted to tell you that I was the one that sent you the bouquet of flowers.”<sup>227</sup>

On June 28, 1983, another Bahá’í detainee, twenty-four year-old Suhayl Hushmand, was executed in Shiraz. Two days later seventy-one year old Ahmad Ali Thabit-Sarvistani died in prison of medical complications. He had been detained since November 1982.<sup>228</sup>

## 6.2. International Condemnation

The mass executions of the Shiraz twenty-two attracted media attention around the world.<sup>229</sup> The international community was outraged at the execution of members of a faith that promotes non-violence, freedom of expression, and religious tolerance. On July 11, 1983, Fortney H. Stark of the U.S. House of Representatives introduced language into a bill before the House calling for sanctions to be put in place against Iran until its government “ceased its persecution of the Bahá’ís.” Stark explicitly referenced

<sup>225</sup> Mahmudnizhad Conversation, *supra* note 57, at 29.

<sup>226</sup> Letter of Witness B to a friend (dated June 26, 1983) (on file with IHRDC) at 3; Letter of Witness C (undated) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>227</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 11.

<sup>228</sup> List of significant dates relating to the prisoners, compiled by local Bahá’í (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC); Letter from a local Bahá’í in Shiraz (providing list of Bahá’ís who were arrested in October and November) (date unknown) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>229</sup> See, e.g., Carlyle Murphy, U.S. Bahá’ís Denounce Abuses, THE WASHINGTON POST, July 6, 1983, at page A1; *Service Planned for 17 Bahá’ís*, THE WASHINGTON POST, July 9, 1983, at page C10.

President Reagan's plea of clemency for the Shiraz prisoners as well as the execution of the 16 men and women in mid-June 1983 as his motivation for calling for action on Iran.<sup>230</sup>

The Iranian Government followed-up the Shiraz executions by introducing a number of legal measures to give some legal cover, albeit after the fact, to its actions. On August 29, 1983, the Iranian Attorney-General announced a ban on the Bahá'í administration in Iran in the pages of the Tehran conservative daily newspaper *Kayhan*.<sup>231</sup>

Iranian government officials also diligently responded to international accusations of human rights abuses with the familiar rhetoric that the Bahá'í Faith was a political organization and an instrument of imperialist Zionism.<sup>232</sup> Sa'id Raja'i Khorassani, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, told the member states that the Bahá'ís posed a threat to Iran and all other Third World countries.<sup>233</sup> In a 1983 interview with ABC News, Khorassani further argued that "Bahá'ísm is a political movement and not a religion - it has a religious mask,"<sup>234</sup> and claimed that Bahá'ísm was intrinsically linked to Israel and Zionism.

A letter dated August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1983 from the Iranian embassy in Great Britain Londonderry City Council captures the Islamic Republic's attitude well:

Just as the Islamic Revolution was capable of removing all espionage bases in the country of the Imperialists, it can and is determined to crush the Zionist espionage dens acting under cover of Bahá'ísm.<sup>235</sup>

### 6.3. Cover-up

The negative backlash from the execution of the Shiraz detainees did prompt the Government of Iran to punish the Religious Magistrate in Shiraz, Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, whose media grandstanding had attracted the world's attention. Hojjatolislam Qaza'i was transferred to a less prestigious position in the General Prosecutor's office in Isfahan.

On August 10, 1983, the Prosecutor General of Shiraz, Hojjatolislam Miremad, tried to deflect criticism in an interview with *Khabar-i Junub*, in which he defended the Revolutionary Court's findings.<sup>236</sup> The Prosecutor General noted that only twenty-two of the ninety-eight Bahá'ís arrested in the 1982 sweeps were sentenced to death. He also added that these sentences were approved by the Supreme Judicial Council in Tehran.<sup>237</sup>

Hojjatolislam Miremad went on to list the crimes he claimed had been committed by the condemned detainees: 1) Collaboration with SAVAK and spying for Israel; 2) Contact with the Chilean dictator,

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<sup>230</sup> Representative Stark of California, speaking for a bill entitled "Banning Trade with Iran until Persecution of Bahá'ís Ceases", on July 11, 1983, to the House of Representatives, H.R. 2778, 90<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., Congressional Record (extensions of remarks), at page 18556.

<sup>231</sup> NAZILA GHANEA, HUMAN RIGHTS, THE UN AND THE BAHÁ'ÍS IN IRAN 111 (2002).

<sup>232</sup> Letter from the Iranian embassy of England regarding the executions of Iranian Bahá'ís, August 18, 1983 (on file with IHRDC) (stating that "[t]he essence of Bahá'ísm is a rather successful experience by imperialism and the enemies of Islam.")

<sup>233</sup> IN THE NAME OF ISLAM (ABC News 1983), recording available at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-2128317632629440784&hl=de> (accessed August 10, 2007.)

<sup>234</sup> *Id.*

<sup>235</sup> Letter to Londonderry City Council by Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, August 18, 1983 (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>236</sup> Article in *KHABAR-I JUNUB* newspaper, No. 889, dated 19/5/1362 [August 10, 1983], text transcribed in written account of Mr. Mohammad Reza Hisami, with supplement by Witness F (dated June 7, 1989) (on file with IHRDC) [hereinafter "August 10, 1983 *KHABAR-I JUNUB* article".]

<sup>237</sup> *Id.*

Augusto Pinochet; 3) Contact with American officials; and 4) Opposing Iranian policy towards Palestine and Lebanon.<sup>238</sup>

However, despite Hojjatolislam Miremad's protests to the contrary, copies of prison visitation cards obtained by the IHRDC demonstrate that the detainees' real 'crime' related solely to their religious identity. Each visitation card has a line item identifying the person's first name, their last name and the crime for which they were being detained. On most of the men's visitation cards the crime had been redacted with a red marker, but family members reported that the charge listed on the original, unredacted cards was membership in the "Wayward Sect of Bahá'ísm."<sup>239</sup> The women's visitation cards typically just bear the letter "B".<sup>240</sup> It seems reasonable to infer that this also stands for 'Bahá'í.'

Years after the Shiraz executions, one surviving family member had cause to visit the Sepah-i Shiraz in a quest to recover confiscated family assets:

My family's crime was their refusal to accept Islam. I came to understand this a few years later when I went to apply to get my father's house back in Shiraz. I went to Sepah-i Shiraz, the same place where the women were held, because the files of the prisoners were kept there. The personnel at Sepah-i Shiraz had changed. Also, people's attitude had changed. When I asked if I could see my father's file, a man told me, "We do not have permission to show this to you." I then asked him to just tell me what my father's crime was. He couldn't believe that I didn't know my father's crime. I told him I didn't know because it has been said that no one is killed for being Bahá'í, so I don't know what my father could have done. He then found my father's sentence in the file and showed it to me. The file stated that due to the crime of being a Bahá'í, a member of the vagrant sect of Bahá'í, and refusal to accept Islam, my father would be sentenced to death and his properties confiscated.<sup>241</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

The twenty-two Bahá'í victims of the Shiraz Revolutionary Court represented a cross-section of their community. They included both young and old, men and women, community leaders and ordinary citizens. Their case symbolizes the predicament of the Bahá'í community in post-Revolutionary Iran.

Members of the Bahá'í Faith remain every bit as vulnerable in today's Iran as they were in 1982. The Bahá'í Faith is denied recognition as a religion under Iranian law; it receives no protections under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, and the community periodically faces coordinated campaigns of discrimination and persecution at the hands of the state. Sites of great religious significance have been destroyed and private property confiscated.

As recently as May 2006, fifty-four Bahá'í youths were detained in Shiraz for initiating and participating in a local multi-faith education project for underprivileged children. The youngest detainee was less than fifteen years old, two years younger than Mona Mahmudnizhad.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> *Id.*

<sup>239</sup> See Visitation card of Mr. Abdul-Husayn Azadi [attached as Appendix 3]; see also Letter from local Bahá'í regarding visitation cards (dated August 9, 1983) (on file with IHRDC).

<sup>240</sup> See Visitation card of Mrs. Nusrat Yalda'i [attached as Appendix 4].

<sup>241</sup> Statement of Witness A, *supra* note 56, at 9.

<sup>242</sup> Bahá'í International Community, *Fifty-four Bahá'ís arrested in Iran* (May 24, 2006), available at <http://www.Bahá'í.org/persecution/newsreleases/24-05-06> (accessed October 18, 2006); Bahá'í International Community, *Update on Arrests in Iran* (May 26, 2006), available at <http://news.bahai.org/story/451> (accessed August 9, 2007).

What happened in Shiraz in 1982-1983 was an extreme example of the persecution directed at Bahá'ís, but is far from being a unique event in post-Revolutionary Iran. The members of three successive Bahá'í national assemblies have been executed on the flimsiest of pretexts, as have local community leaders in cities such as Yazd, Qazvin, Tabriz and Hamadan.

However, there is another side to the events in Shiraz, which also merits attention. Not all Iranians accepted the regime's demonization of the local Bahá'í community: there was the neighbor who tried to protect the Mahmudnizhad family from the Revolutionary Guards sent to arrest Yadu'llah and Mona; the bus driver who sent flowers to the families of the executed women; the mortuary guard who asked Mrs. Mahmudnizhad for forgiveness. Not everyone succumbs to prejudice.

The story of the arrest and execution of the Shiraz twenty-two exposes one of the most egregious of all human rights violations – the persecution of men and women for acts of worship and religious belief. But it also tells a story of a community's strength and defiance in the face of such acts.

## 8. Methodology

IHRDC gathered information for this report from the examination of the following sources:

- *Testimony of victims and witnesses.* These included witness statements taken by IHRDC attorneys from survivors of the 1982 Shiraz arrests and other eyewitnesses. In addition, IHRDC was provided access to interviews of victims' family members conducted by film producer Jack Lenz for his forthcoming film about the youngest member of the Shiraz twenty-two, tentatively titled *Mona's Dream*.
- *Members of the Bahá'í community.* The IHRDC was granted access to correspondence and contemporary accounts of events in Shiraz in 1982-83, written by some members of the local Bahá'í community who were arrested and imprisoned in Shiraz but later released.
- *Government documents.* These include recorded public statements by state officials, statements released by Iranian government agencies and documents relating to judicial proceedings, such as official prison records.
- *Documents issued by inter-governmental organizations.* These include UN resolutions emanating from the General Assembly and reports by United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as reports by regional organizations such as the European Union.
- *Books and articles written by private individuals; photographs and sketches.* These include published accounts of prisoners who were present during the incidents described, photos taken by members of the Bahá'í community or published by the Iranian media since 1979, as well as prisoners' sketches illustrating the layout of the prisons in which they were detained.
- *Academic articles.* A number of historians and jurists have written on the persecution of the Iranian Bahá'ís.

Where the report cites or relies on information provided by government actors or other involved parties, it specifies the source of such information and evaluates the information in light of the relative reliability of each source. The IHRDC has meticulously cross-checked all the sources of information used to compile this report to ensure their credibility and accuracy.

Some individuals mentioned in this report still reside in Iran, so it has been necessary to conceal their identities behind pseudonymic initials or pseudonyms. In each instance, specific documentation relating to these victims is held on file at the IHRDC.

All names of places, people, organizations, etc. originally written in Farsi have been transliterated using the system of the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES), available at [http://assets.cambridge.org/MES/mes\\_ifc.pdf](http://assets.cambridge.org/MES/mes_ifc.pdf). Under the IJMES system, names of places with an accepted English spelling and names of prominent cultural or political figures may be spelled according to the English norm.

This report was reviewed prior to publication by Professor Martha Minow of Harvard University, Professor Lawrence Douglas of Amherst College and Roya Boroumand of the Boroumand Foundation.



Community Under Siege:  
The Ordeal of the Bahá'ís of Shiraz

**Appendices**



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## **Appendix 1**

Exclusive Interview of Khabar with Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, the Religious Magistrate and Head of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz; the Religious Magistrate of Shiraz: "I warn the Bahá'ís to Come to the Bosom of Islam." KHABAR-I JUNUB, NO. 782, 3/12/1361 (FEBRUARY 22, 1983)

(Followed by Translation)







## **Exclusive interview of Khabar Newspaper with Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, Religious Magistrate and Head of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz,**

### ***Religious Magistrate of Shiraz: I warn the Bahá'ís to come to the Bosom of Islam***

In an interview with Khabar Newspaper, brother Hojjatolislam Qaza'i, Religious Magistrate and Head of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz reminded a Khabar reporter that "from the start, the Islamic Revolutionary Courts, the institutions that rose from the heart of the bloody revolt of the masses, established their laws based on the Koran and Hadith. Even though some mistakes might have taken place, these organs had set their minds on solving the problems of the people and doing it with the utmost purity and sincerity of spirit."

A question was posed that asked about the range of the investigative work the Prosecutor's Office of Shiraz is now responsible for since the new changes were implemented and new responsibilities were given to that office. Mr. Qaza'i responded: "The types of cases that the Revolutionary Court investigates are, in order of priority, combating anti-revolutionary elements and the groups that are deviant and combating [God], such as the Mojahedin, the leftists and those who adhere to the East [communists] and the West [USA and Europe], monarchists, armed insurgents and Godless rebels. Then we are combating the opium and heroin-smuggling groups and more generally addiction, illegal possession and such matters."

He added: "The Ministry of Justice was governed by the corrupt ideology of the Shah under the previous regime. Ever since it has been reformed through the efforts of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Hezbollahi and committed brothers of that Ministry, it has been given its rightful responsibilities such as: combating prostitution, corruption and addiction. However, the Revolutionary Court will still investigate these problems until gradually, God willing, all of them are given over to the Ministry of Justice."

The Head of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz was then asked about the number of cases that are under investigation by his court, to which he replied: "Generally, one of the distinctive characteristics of the Revolutionary Court is the effort it makes to complete and investigate cases as soon as possible and not to leave a case unfinished." He added: "At present, there are about 500 cases under investigation in this court and most of them are [files opened for] summonses and about matters that have not yet been fully researched or for which the responsible party can not be reached." Then he talked about the situation of the combative and deviant groups and said: "Even though these groups were once an upsetting matter and a threat to the Nation of Hezbollah, and the government that rose from the people, and the institutions built with the Islamic hands of the people, now, with the grace of God, their deceit and trickery have been annulled and they are caught in the fire they started themselves."

Hojjatolislam Qaza'i continued: "The Mojahedin have conspired and committed treachery and crime with the support of the monarchists, atheist capitalists, America, France and Iraq but Almighty God guided the hands of the Nation of Hezbollah and sent the Mojahedin to hell. With the help of God, some of the Mojaheds have reformed in the Islamic Republic prisons and have returned to the bosom of Islam and the Islamic Nation. Hence, it can be said that there exists no problem such as the Mojahedin, Paykar, Aqaliyat, Rah-i Kargar, and the other groups that idiotically fought the bright, all-illuminating sun of Islam. Of course there still are individuals here and there who attempt to do foolish things, and as Imam Sajjad (Pbuh) said: 'We thank God who gave us foolish enemies.' These foolish enemies will eventually attempt to destroy themselves with their thoughtless acts and indeed the destiny of the Tudeh Party [Iranian communist party]—that is a party based on desire as opposed to the Hezbollah [our Party] that is the Party of God and based on the will of God—will be no other than [that said in the Koran]: 'Indeed the falsehood is weak' and all parties are condemned to sustain damage. As God says: 'Indeed the Party of Satan is the one who receives harm.' "

Our reporter asked about the execution of the 22 members of the Bahá'í establishment in Shiraz to which the Religious Magistrate and Head of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Shiraz responded by saying: "In response to this question I have to say that the great nation of Iran which is following and implementing the teachings of the Imam's, God willing, will fulfill the prayer of Prophet Noah: 'And Noah said: My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers; For surely if Thou leave them they will lead astray Thy servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (children).' The uprising of the Iranian people was based on the ideology of the Koran. [The Iranians] have pledged, with God's help, to establish the government of God on earth. Hence, they can't abide the deviant Bahá'ís who are the puppets of Satan and those serving Satan, the super-powers and their agents such as the Universal House of Justice of Israel. It is self-evident that in the Islamic Republic of Iran, there is absolutely no room for Bahá'ísm or the Bahá'ís. They [the Bahá'ís] say, 'We never participated in any of the anti-taqut<sup>1</sup> demonstrations and never chanted anti-taqut slogans. We never voted in any of the Islamic Republic elections, from the original one that changed the accursed Monarchical regime to the Islamic Republic to the very last and recent election of the Assembly of the Experts. We didn't participate because these all involve politics and according to our religion, we condemn participation in political affairs. We have our own elections and the Bahá'í establishment is independent.' They say, 'in our own establishment, we have voting and special assemblies. We have Feasts and Conferences.' "

Hojjatolislam Qaza'i added: "So we see that these seeds of corruption, these children of Satan and mercenaries of the Universal House of Justice of Israel, have created their own establishment and government, albeit a comical one. What is even more ridiculous is that they say 'we abide by the government's laws and whatever they say, we are obedient to it.' But, this is a lie to cover their real intentions. Iranian Bahá'ís have 1-year, 5-year, 10-year and even longer plans that have been devised by the colonizing Satans and carried out by the followers of Bahá'ísm."

"It is necessary for me to mention that these mercenaries [of imperialism] recently published a book and in its preface, they insulted the martyred President, the late Mr. Raja'i, and the martyred Prime Minister, the late Mr. Bahonar, and called them liars. They also insulted the late martyr Beheshti and the other 72 martyrs of the Central Office of the Islamic Republic Party in such a vulgar manner that I can't dare repeat it. These mercenaries [of imperialism] also considered the unjust Iran-Iraq war and the treachery of the Mojahedin to our meek citizens to be a battle between oppressor and oppressor; and the glorious slogan of 'No to the east, No to the west' a violent, ugly and despicable roar and an insult to the brilliant Iranian literature. They also denigrate the Shi'a faithful, who are the true children and the worthy products of Adam (pbuh) and the cream of humanity. As they say in their shameful text: 'According to the saying of the Blessed One, the Shi'as are seen to be the lowest of the people.' "

Hojjatolislam Qaza'i continued: "The Bahá'ís are religiously bound to follow the Universal House of Justice and the Universal House of Justice is religiously bound, according to the Bahá'í faith, to follow the government of Israel. However, the Bahá'ís are not arrested merely for being Bahá'í. Only the active members of their establishment who are in direct or indirect contact with the Universal House of Justice, who are an offense to the blood spilt by Islamic Iran's Martyrs, who do not value the government and the nation of Iran, who are 'Leaders of Infidelity'<sup>2</sup> and connected to a combative infidel establishment, those are the only ones arrested. If the Bahá'ís were to be arrested merely for being Bahá'ís, all the Bahá'ís in Shiraz would have been arrested by now, which is not the case. Only a handful have been arrested for the aforementioned crimes and they will be punished depending on their individual crimes."

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<sup>1</sup> Taqut, meaning false gods, is a term Khomeini made popular referring to the Pahlavi regime and their followers

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the Koran, Surah Al-Tawbah (9.12) that says: "And if they break their oaths after their agreement and (openly) revile your religion, then kill [fight] the leaders of the infidels [nonbelievers]."

The Head of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz said: “Here and now, I announce to the Bahá’ís that, if they consider themselves obedient to the Islamic Republic and the Constitution [of Iran], according to article 13 of the Constitution, any activity is forbidden for the Bahá’ís and so establishing the assemblies, groups, feasts, and such things are all crimes and the violators are all considered criminals under the Constitution.”

Hojatolislam Qaza’i added: “I’m going to use this opportunity and ask all the fair and wise Bahá’ís to come to the bosom of dear Islam and wash themselves of the shame of following the Bahá’í Faith that is invented by the colonizing powers. By doing such a courageous act, that is fighting the firmly rooted opinions and behaviors of the Bahá’ís, which has no outcome other than shame and helplessness in this world and the next, they will save themselves. They should repent from Bahá’ism which is reasonably and logically condemned before it is too late. Otherwise, soon a day shall come when the Nation of Islam will do to the Bahá’ís, who are showing a more dangerous image and follow satanic religious nonsense, as they did to the Mojahedin. [The Nation of Islam will] do its religious duty and the Bahá’ís should know that they are not stronger than the Mojahedin and the Nation of Hezbollah is not powerless in uprooting them. Thanks be to God, everyday many Bahá’ís come to Islam and curse the Leaders of the Bahá’í Faith and the newspapers show the rational acts of these people.”

About the Execution order of about 20 of the members of the Bahá’í establishment, he said: “These people who have been sentenced to be executed are active members of Bahá’ism [Bahá’í establishment] and simple-minded people were their prey. Their adherence to the Satans inside and outside [of the country] is evident and their animosity toward Islam and Muslims was most obvious.”

The question was asked that following the 9-part [Pardon] order of Imam Khomeini, how many prisoners will be released from the Shiraz prison. Hojatolislam Qaza’i responded: “About releasing prisoners, I have to say that many of them were and will be released. Right now, according to the Imam’s pardon, 60 prisoners have been released and according to the new order that Imam has approved, approximately 300 more will be released.”

In response to a question that asked “whether or not the Khan<sup>3</sup> concept still exists in Shiraz,” the Head of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz, pointed out a Hadith that said the oppressor and the oppressee are both sinners and said: “If people have the need for a Khan, a Khan will be fostered and those with dominant personalities will appear amongst the people as Khans or under other names. However, there is no Khan in Shiraz as we speak and its greatest symbol and figurehead, Khusraw Khan Qashqa’i was destroyed. This in itself manifests that the Islamic society is against Khans and such concepts. So the brave nomads all united to eradicate the conditions for the existence of a Khan because they feared that, God forbid, tomorrow a crisis called Khan would rise amongst them and become a nuisance again.”

Finally, he asked the people to be a worthy nation for their Imam, the idol-breaking Khomeini, and always be mindful of God and His worship and put his contentment before their own.

He also asked the martyr-fostering nation [of Iran] not to forget the attack of America, in the form of the Baathist war of aggression waged by Saddam, so that the Nation can, as before, create marvels for the world, and history and honor and pride for future generations. And they should know that, as the Koran says, in Jihad against the Infidelity that surrounds us, one of the following two will transpire; meeting God, the height of our dreams, or victory over our enemy that is also our hope so that the religion of God can govern the earth. And to ensure our success and honor and continuous growth, we should never forget the two principles of “commanding good and forbidding evil.”

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<sup>3</sup> Khan is a title for a tribal leader in Turkish and is widely used amongst the Iranian Turkish nomadic and other tribes, as well as the Qashqa’i Turkish tribes who reside in the south – central provinces in Iran. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there have been conflicts between the tribal Khans and the central government. However, the IRI claims that the institution of Khan has now been completely abolished.



## **Appendix 2**

There Are Hands Masterminding the Attempts to Weaken this Republic. KAYHAN, 8/3/1362 (MAY 29, 1983)

(Followed by Translation)





## **There are hands masterminding the attempts to weaken this Republic**

[Translation of the excerpt related to the Bahá'ís]

I hope Great God will take the plague of the tyrants and nuisances away from the nation that has stood up for His cause, so that it gets a chance to deal with the most pressing issues. However, as long as the superpowers are on their thrones, the task looks a little difficult.

I wonder if you heard the U.S. President's speech broadcasted from certain radio stations, did you notice that he was pleading to the whole world about the Bahá'ís in Iran; [saying that] these Bahá'ís who are in Iran are innocent and not spies; that they do nothing but perform religious ceremonies, [he is complaining] that Iran has sentenced 22 of them to death for performing their religious ceremonies. He has pleaded to the whole world that they [Baha'i's] are not spies, they are people who are not interfering with anything; and they [Reagan and his supporters] are bringing this issue up because they are humanitarian! Had it not been for him, well, some simple minded people would have thought that they [Bahá'ís] are people who, be it that their belief is corrupted, are busy with their own works, are occupied with performing religious rituals they consider to be holy. But now, when Mr. Reagan has said that they were not doing anything but their religious rituals, can we really still believe this?

Similarly, when the Tudeh party was outlawed, the Soviets protested that they were a group of innocent people who agreed with the Islamic Republic, supported it like everyone else, assisted it and, were arrested and sent to the prison for no reason by the Iranian government. Mr. Reagan says that these Bahá'ís, these poor people, are calm and silent, are occupied with their own prayers and religious rituals; performing the necessities of their own religion and Iran has arrested them only because their beliefs are against the [Iranian government's] beliefs. Were these people not spies, you [Reagan and his supporters] would not be raising your voices! You [Reagan and his supporters] are complaining because they are a group that benefit you. We know what kind of people you are. We know the U.S. and that their sense of humanitarianism is not suddenly stirred to make such a fuss for twenty-two Bahá'ís who are, as they say, 'captured' in Iran, and that they are not making such a ruckus and pleading to the whole world to answer the cry of these people due to their humanitarianism. People know you [Reagan and his supporters]. You, who have made Iraq do to our country things every single day that even the Mongols did not.

Iraq arrested a group of great clergymen—like Ayatollah Aqa Seyyed Yusef whom I know, such a fine true person—for what appears to be a further act of revenge directed against the late Ayatollah Hakim. [Yusef was] arrested along with a group of adults and children of his family. If you, [Reagan and his supporters] were concerned humanitarians would it not have been appropriate to say something about this, to publish just one sentence in your media asking about things happening [to the Shi'a] in both Iraq and the [occupied territories of] Iran?

Did you [Mr. Reagan] see what Baha'i's did? Did you read their files that you say such or are you able to foretell the unknown? If we had no evidence to prove they were U.S. spies, the mere concern expressed about them by Reagan suffices as evidence. And similarly, if we had no evidence that the [members of the] Tudeh party were spies, the mere concern expressed about them by the Soviets suffices as evidence. But, let me tell you that neither were the [members of the] Tudeh party tried and imprisoned by our courts for being [in the] Tudeh party nor were Baha'i's tried for being Baha'i's. These people have issues. The Tudeh party itself spoke up and revealed that it had a [criminal] history. Bahá'ís are not a religious group, they are a political party; a party which was previously supported by Britain, and now is being supported by the U.S. These people are spies, just like [the Tudeh party]. If they are not spies, well they are like many

other people who have deviant beliefs; such as communists or other groups. But people, our courts did not arrest and imprison them for being communists or having deviant beliefs.

The same is true about the Tudeh party, before they started plotting they were left alone—of course, they were being monitored for what they were doing, as they had a [criminal] history—but once they started plotting and were close to executing their plans, our dear guards pounced on them.

The problem is that you Mr. Reagan back them [Baha'i's], and the others [Tudeh party] are backed by, say Mr. Soviet, and this is proof that these people have a special purpose and that the superpowers benefit from them. They benefit the superpowers by telling them our news. They are spying on the nation and the government of Iran. These are the problems that our country must deal with today, with these superpowers and these deviant people.



### **Appendix 3**

Visitation card of Mr. Abdul-Husayn Azadi

(Followed by Translation)





زندگانه، مادر دانندگام باشد  
(امام خمینی)

## کارت ملاقات

نام: **عمیرالدین**  
شهرت: **آزادگی فرزند غلام**  
آنها: **...**

نسبت	ملاقات کننده	نسبت	ملاقات کننده

توضیح: از افراد فوق فقط با تفریحی ملاقات دارند.

توصیف را به تقوی الله و نظام امر م  
شما را به تقوی و نظم در کارها توصیه می‌کنم. اوم علی (ع)

## توضیحات:

- ۱- تنها به بستگان درجه یک زندانی ملاقات داده می‌شود (پدر، مادر، خواهر، همسر، برادر، فرزند)
- ۲- حفظ کارت با خانواده زندانی است؛ در صورت مفقود شدن کارت مجدد صادر نخواهد شد.
- ۳- بدون کارت به هیچ عنوان ملاقات داده نمی‌شود.
- ۴- داشتن شناسنامه عکس دار همراه با کارت الزامی است.
- ۵- این کارت جز در مورد ملاقات هیچگونه ارزشی ندارد.

زندانی عادل آباد - سپاه پاسداران انقلاب  
اسلامی شیراز دیندار



### In the Name of the Exalted

Picture The Prisons Must be Universities.  
(Imam Khomeini)

### VISITATION CARD

Name: Abdul-Husayn

Last Name: Azadi

Child of: Qulam

Charged With: **Wayward sect of Bahá'ism**

Visitor	Relation	Visitor	Relation
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		

NOTE: From the aforementioned, only .4.. have visitation rights.

### Usikum Bitaqwa wa Nazm Amrahum

I advise you to faith and order in matters.

Imam Ali (Pbuh)

### Notes:

1. Only first degree relatives have visitation. (father, mother, sister, wife, brother, children)
2. Keeping the card is the responsibility of the prisoner's family. If lost, a new card will not be issued.
3. There will be no visitation without the card.
4. It is necessary to have a valid birth certificate along with the card.
5. This card only serves the purpose of visitation and has no other value.

Adelabad Prison – Sepah-i Pasdaran-i Inqilab-i Islamiyyih  
Shiraz – Ward 4



## **Appendix 4**

Visitation card of Mrs. Nusrat Yalda'i

(Followed by Translation)





پیشه: معلمی

زندگیها: باهبل دانشگاه پلاند  
(بیام مسلمان)

کارت ملاقات

نام: حضرت  
شهرت: غمخیزان  
آدرس: ...

نام	تاریخ	ملاقات	ملاحظات

توضیح: کارزار ...

اوصیایا بطوری اذله و فطیلم ابر کیم

کسار به نظری و نظری در وقتا نوسه من کیم، ابرام بل (م)

اوصیایات:

- ۱- دنیا به بیستیگانه درجه نیک و بدانی ملاقات داده میشود (پسند، مبادو، عموها مبرو، هیسرا، یوزلقد، قوزلقد)
- ۲- حفظ کارت با خانواده زنده اونی است و در صورت بدبود شدن کسارتین مجدد مسازد، بطور اذله شد.
- ۳- بدون کورت به هیچ عنوان ملاقات داده نمیشود.
- ۴- دانشی شد اسنانیه و کس در مسراه با کسارت التزامی است.
- ۵- ابرام کسارت جسر در مسور و ملاقات جهت گرفته

اوردی نه اورد

زندگان عابر آباد مرصیه و امداران انقلاب  
اسلامی شیراز



### In the Name of the Exalted

Picture      The Prisons Must be Universities.  
(Imam Khomeini)

### VISITATION CARD

**Name:** Nusrat

**Last Name:** Qafrani

**Child of:** Quds'ullah

**Charged With:** B

Visitor	Relation	Visitor	Relation

**NOTE:** From the aforementioned, only .4.. have visitation rights.

### Usikum Bitaqwa wa Nazm Amrahum

I advise you to faith and order in matters.

Imam Ali (Pbuh)

### Notes:

1. Only first degree relatives have visitation. (father, mother, sister, wife, brother, children)
2. Keeping the card is the responsibility of the prisoner's family. If lost, a new card will not be issued.
3. There will be no visitation without the card.
4. It is necessary to have a valid birth certificate along with the card.
5. This card only serves the purpose of visitation and has no other value.

Adelabad Prison – Sepah-i Pasdaran-i Inqilab-i Islamiyyih  
Shiraz – Ward 1







**Look for the forthcoming IHRDC Report:**

**No Safe Haven: Iran's Campaign of Political Assassination**

A report on the Islamic Republic's twenty-year global campaign to silence political opposition outside Iran.



Father and daughter, Yadu'llah and Mona Mahmudnizhad, were among the twenty-two members of the Bahá'í community of Shiraz sentenced to death in 1983 for refusing to renounce their religious beliefs. Yadu'llah was executed on March 12, 1983. Mona, who was seventeen years old, was executed with nine other Bahá'í women on June 18, 1983.