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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS
IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL
AND OTHER DEPENDANT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Treatment of the Baha'is in Iran

Note by the Secretary-General

The present note has been prepared pursuant to Sub-Commission resolution 8 (XXXIV) of 9 September 1981 by which the Secretary-General was requested "to submit all relevant information about the treatment of the Baha'is in Iran to the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-eighth session."

1. At its thirty-fourth session the Sub-Commission had before it notes verbales from the Permanent Mission of Canada (E/CN.4/1476-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1472) requesting circulation of the text of a motion unanimously adopted on 9 June 1981 by the House of Commons of Canada regarding the treatment of the Baha'i Community in Iran; and from the Permanent Mission of Australia (E/CN.4/1478-E/CN.4/Sub.2/488) requesting circulation of the text of two motions: one moved in the Senate of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by Senator Ruplik and adopted by the Senate on 26 March 1981, and the other on the question and answer in the Senate on 7 May 1981, both of which relate to the treatment of religious minorities, particularly the Baha'is in Iran.

2. The Sub-Commission also considered at its thirty-fourth session a note verbale from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other International organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General dated 14 September 1981, circulated as document E/CN.4/Sub.2/475-E/CN.4/1516. The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Sub-Commission on instructions from its Government, as follows:

"The human rights and fundamental freedoms of the individual are enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including, in particular, articles 13, 14 and 23.

Article 13 provides that 'Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian Iranians shall be the sole recognized religious minorities which shall be free, within the limits of the law, to perform their religious rites and to act, as far as their personal status and religious teachings are concerned, according to their liturgy'.

According to article 14, 'In conforming to the holy verse of the Koran, "the Almighty never forbids you to act kindly and fairly towards those who do not war against you on account of your religion, and do not expel you from your homeland. God loves the just." The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Muslims shall act with Islamic morality, justice and equity towards non-Muslims and respect their human rights. This principle shall be valid for those who do not engage in any activities or plot against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.'

Under article 23, 'The control of opinions shall be prohibited and no one may be attacked or censured for his opinions'.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran is authorized to quote statements made by two of the highest authorities of the Islamic Republic.

According to Ayatollah Moussavi Ardebili, President of the Supreme Court of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 'The courts of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the procedures which they apply are governed by Islamic standards and laws, as well as the Constitution and the country's official laws and regulations. Under those same laws, no one is to be molested, prosecuted or persecuted on account of his religious beliefs. Anyone who is brought to trial is to be judged by the lawful judicial bodies regardless of his faith and shall be entitled to all the facilities he needs for his defence. In no circumstances may he be denied those rights'.

According to Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 'The rights of non-Muslim Iranians are protected in the same way as those of Muslim Iranians and the law does not tolerate any discrimination towards them. If non-Muslim Iranians are brought to trial before the judicial bodies, it is in no way because of their faith, but solely on account of the acts of which they are accused. It goes without saying that an Iranian Baha'i who has been the subject of a judicial measure may not be absolved from responsibility for an indictable offence merely by virtue of belonging to the Baha'i sect. It should be noted that there are numerous Iranian Baha'is living in complete security in Iran, with nothing whatsoever to fear. The only ones who are prosecuted and sentenced are those who have been involved in acts of espionage and other activities contrary to the higher interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mention may also be made of the propaganda campaign mounted by the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran to discredit the Islamic Revolution. But all that in no way tallies with the true facts and is therefore totally unfounded'.

3. The Sub-Commission discussed the situation concerning the Baha'i community in Iran during the following session: 912th meeting on 28 August 1981 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SR.912); 913th meeting on 28 August 1981 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SR.913); and 914th meeting (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SR.914) on 31 August 1981. At its 929th meeting, on 9 September 1981, the Sub-Commission adopted resolution 8 (XXXIV) 19 votes to none, with 5 abstentions, that reads as follows:

"The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

Welcoming the adoption by the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-seventh session and by the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1981 of a Draft Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Recalling its resolution 10 (XXXIII) in which it expressed its profound concern for the safety of the members of the Baha'i Community in Iran and requested the Secretary-General to invite the Government of Iran to grant full protection of fundamental rights and freedoms to this religious minority,

Having now heard statements clearly demonstrating the systematic persecution of the Baha'is in Iran, including summary arrests, torture, beatings, executions, murders, kidnappings, disappearances, abductions, and many other forms of harassment,

Convinced that the treatment of the Baha'is is motivated by religious intolerance and a desire to eliminate the Baha'i Faith from the land of its birth,

Concerned that the Government of Iran appears to have ignored all previous approaches made on behalf of this Community,

1. Expresses its profound concern for the perilous situation facing this religious Community;

2. Appreciates the efforts already made by the Secretary-General on behalf of this Community;

3. Urges the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to persuade the Government of Iran to prevent further attacks on the Baha'i Community and to grant them religious freedom;

4. Draws the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the perilous situation faced by the Baha'i Community of Iran and requests the Secretary-General to submit all relevant information about the treatment of the Baha'is in Iran to the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-eighth session."

4. On 3 November 1981 the Secretary-General transmitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran a note verbale that reads as follows:

"The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and has the honour to refer to resolution 8 (XXXIV) adopted by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights on 9 September 1981. A copy of the resolution is attached to this note verbale. By paragraph 4 of the resolution the Sub-Commission,

'Draws the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the perilous situation faced by the Baha'i community of Iran and requests the Secretary-General to submit all relevant information about the treatment of the Baha'is in Iran to The Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-eighth session.'

The Secretary-General would be grateful to receive any information that His Excellency's Government may wish to make available, relevant to this request of the Sub-Commission."

4A. The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted on 25 January 1982 a note verbale that reads:

"The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Office of the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations - Division of Human Rights - and with reference to the latter's note No. G/SO 234(25) dated 3 November, 1981 addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning the resolution No. 8 (XXXIV) dated 9 December 1981 and upon instructions of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the honour to state the following:

Measures taken by Revolutionary courts with regard to Baha'is, concerns only those of them whose close contact with intelligence circles of zionism and imperialism, has been proved, and the service they render to them against the political and economic interests of Iran is clear. Such treatment is given not only to Baha'is, but to any Iranian citizen in general who undertakes acts of treason in the interest of foreigners."

5. Pursuant to operative paragraph 4 of resolution 8 (XXXIV) notes requesting information about the treatment of the Baha'is in Iran were sent on 3 November 1981 to the Council of Europe, Amnesty International, World Council of Churches, International Federation of Human Rights, International League for Human Rights, International Commission of Jurists, Pax Romana, World Moslem Congress, Islamic Conference and to the Baha'is International Community.

6. A number of replies were received by the Secretariat in response to the request sent on 3 November 1981 to the organizations mentioned above in paragraph 5. The International Federation of Human Rights informed that it had intended to carry out a mission by experts, but the Iranian authorities had prevented them from entering Iran and that

"Our organization has received numerous reliable reports that the leaders of the Baha'is were the object of repression and particular discrimination in Iran".

Amnesty International stated that it did not dispose of specific information other than that made available by the Baha'is themselves. The Council of Europe provided on 4 January 1982 "a reply from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Written Question by members of the Parliamentary Assembly on prosecution of the members of the Baha'i Faith in Iran", which states:

"The Committee of Ministers and the Governments of member States are deeply concerned by reports about persecution of members of the Baha'i community in Iran for their religious beliefs. They deplore the fact that the fundamental rights of that community and of its members are not safeguarded in Iran.

The Committee supports the endeavours of the United Nations to improve the lot of the Baha'i community and calls for an intensification of those endeavours as an expression of the international community's concern at the violation of the physical integrity and freedom of persons by reason of their membership of a religious community.

With this in mind, the Committee of Ministers and the Governments of the member States support the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the execution of the mission entrusted to him on 10 September 1981 by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights to 'continue his efforts to persuade the Government of Iran to prevent further attacks on the Baha'i community and to grant them religious freedom.'

The Committee of Ministers will follow the development of events closely and attentively. It would be a matter of deep concern if, at the next session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in February 1982, it was not possible to report a considerable improvement in the position of the Baha'i community in Iran.

The Committee requested the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe to communicate the foregoing to the Secretary-General of the United Nations."

7. The Baha'i International Community submitted on 15 December 1981 a report on the background and nature of the persecutions of the Baha'is, the systematic elimination of the Baha'is' leaders, the confiscation and destruction of Baha'i Community assets and other aspects of the treatment of the Baha'is in Iran. On 12 January 1981 the Baha'i International Community provided a summary of the report which is reproduced below. The full report, and the supporting documents referred to in this summary, are available for reference with the Secretariat.

"SUMMARY REPORT ON THE TREATMENT OF THE BAHAI'IS IN IRAN

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran recognizes and protects the Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian minorities in that country, but denies recognition to Iran's largest religious minority, the 300,000 followers of the Baha'i Faith.

The Baha'is are not a foreign element within Iran: they are indigenous Iranians who love their country and revere it as the birthplace of their faith. They are a gentle, peace-loving community who, in accordance with the tenets of their faith, uphold the divine origin of all the major world religions, abstain from partisan politics, shun involvement in any form of subversive activity and demonstrate the utmost loyalty and obedience to their Government. They thus pose no threat to any person or institution in Iran.

Despite this, they have become the victims of a post-revolutionary campaign of religious persecution of such malevolence and intensity that it presages the eradication of the Baha'i community as a religious minority in Iran.

BACKGROUND TO THE PERSECUTION

The current wave of persecutions against the Baha'is in Iran cannot be viewed as a recent development arising from the Islamic Revolution. Since the inception of their faith in the middle of the last century, the Baha'is have suffered constant repression.

The persecution of the Baha'is has its roots in religious prejudice. From its earliest days, the Baha'i Faith has been misrepresented in Iran as a heretical sect of Islam, actively engaged in designs to overthrow Islam in its existing form. In

the last century, over 20,000 early believers were branded as heretics and put to death in circumstances of appalling cruelty. Under subsequent régimes (including those of the Pahlavis) the persecution continued, often accompanied by bloodshed. Now, in post-revolutionary Iran, differences in religious ideology are once again being used by fanatical elements to justify violent attacks on Baha'is.

Religious prejudice against the Baha'i community has become institutionalized in Iran. At no stage in its history has the Baha'i Faith been granted recognition as an independent religion by the Iranian Government or under the Iranian Constitution. The lack of constitutional recognition and protection for the Baha'is has enabled their enemies to attack them with almost complete assurance of impunity; has permitted successive Governments to enact discriminatory legislation curtailing their fundamental rights and freedoms; and has rendered them a readily-identifiable minority to be used by the Government as scapegoats to divert popular attention from other issues and provide a focus for public grievances during times of constitutional unrest. The omission of the Baha'i minority from the new Constitution has served to perpetuate and intensify the scale of these injustices.

SYSTEMATIC NATURE OF THE PERSECUTION

Soon after the onset of revolution in Iran, it became apparent that the numerous attacks on Baha'is and their property in all parts of the country were not the random acts of fanatical mobs but formed part of a systematic and co-ordinated campaign by the revolutionary authorities against the entire Baha'i community. The aim of this campaign was, and is, nothing less than the eradication of the Iranian Baha'i community and the obliteration of all traces of the Baha'i Faith from the land of its birth.

Responsible Government officials in Iran have inadvertently confirmed in private conversations that such a plan exists and that the eradication of the Baha'i community is to be accomplished by the following means:

- the arrest and execution of prominent Baha'is
- the confiscation of the assets of the Baha'i community
- the financial strangulation and intimidation of individual Baha'is to force them to recant their faith.

SYSTEMATIC ELIMINATION OF THE LEADERS OF THE IRANIAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

The Baha'i Faith has no ecclesiastical hierarchy of priests or mullahs. The administration of the affairs of the Baha'i community is conducted, at both national and local levels, by a council of nine adult believers, male or female, elected annually by secret ballot. Membership in these institutions, and in committees appointed by them, is regarded as a service and religious duty and does not imply or confer any form of power or privilege. A relatively small number of Baha'is who have distinguished themselves by service to their faith are periodically appointed as complementary agencies to act as advisers to the national and local administrative institutions.

There are currently 500 local administrative institutions of the Baha'i Faith (called Local Spiritual Assemblies) in the cities, towns and villages of Iran. The members of the National Spiritual Assembly and of the Local Spiritual Assemblies, together with the appointed officers of the faith, may be said to constitute the leadership of the Iranian Baha'i community. These are the 'prominent Baha'is' whose elimination is a major goal of the campaign of persecution.

Since the start of the revolution, a large number of prominent Baha'is have been kidnapped, murdered, assassinated or summarily arrested and held in prison for long periods without formal charges. Of those imprisoned, many have been executed by order of the revolutionary courts. Many still remain in prison.

On 21st August 1980, all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iran, together with two appointed officers of the faith, were summarily arrested by revolutionary guardsmen while meeting in a private home. The Government-controlled media accused them of complicity in the recently-attempted coup, but the authorities later denied all knowledge of their arrest or of their whereabouts, which remain unknown.

In those cases where formal charges were brought against Baha'is, their execution was invariably justified by the revolutionary courts on the grounds that they were agents of Zionism, collaborators with the Pahlavi régime, opponents of Islam, enemies of the Government and people of Iran, and moral degenerates. The falsity of these charges is explained below. Their spurious nature is compellingly demonstrated by the fact that, in every case, the Baha'i concerned was offered his life and freedom if only he would recant his faith.

In August 1981, following a storm of international protest about the treatment of the Baha'is, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a categorical denial that any Baha'i had been executed in Iran because of his religion. Thereafter, although the executions continued, attempts were made by the authorities to conceal them. The families of the condemned men received no warning of their imminent deaths, and no official announcements were made concerning the executions.

The total number of Baha'is killed for their religious beliefs since the start of the Islamic revolution now stands at 81. (Schedules detailing summary executions, kidnappings, assassinations, murders and summary detentions of Baha'is are available for examination.)

CONFISCATION AND DESTRUCTION OF BAHAI COMMUNITY ASSETS

The Iranian Baha'i community has never been allowed to hold community property in its own name. Accordingly, at the time of the revolution, all Baha'i community properties in Iran were held by a non-profit company, the Umaná Company, specially created to hold them in trust. One of the first acts of the revolutionary Government was to confiscate the Umaná Company and all its holdings.

In all parts of Iran, Baha'i holy places and religious sites were attacked by mobs, desecrated and, in some cases, totally destroyed. Baha'i cemeteries were bulldozed and graves broken open. Baha'i welfare institutions, serving all races and religions, were appropriated and all rights in them denied to Baha'is. The major Baha'i banking company, Nawnahalan, was taken over by the Government, and the freezing of its assets swept away the life savings of its 150,000 Baha'i shareholders and investors. Local Baha'i centres were looted and burned. The National Baha'i Centre in Teheran was turned over to fanatics and designated a 'Free Muslim University'.

The House of the Báb in Shiráz, the Baha'i community's holiest shrine in Iran and a place of pilgrimage for Baha'is the world over, was razed to the ground. The authorities, who had given written assurances to the Baha'is that it had been confiscated solely for its protection, subsequently initiated roadworks designed to obliterate the site.

FINANCIAL STRANGULATION AND INTIMIDATION OF INDIVIDUAL BAHÁ'ÍS

Physical intimidation to induce recantation. Deprived, simply by virtue of being Baha'is, of any form of protection under the law (including protection of their civil rights and liberties), the members of this religious minority have been the helpless victims of violent attacks. Countless Baha'is have been terrorized both in the streets and in their own homes. Elderly men and women, and very young children, have suffered vicious beatings at the hands of mobs. Infants have been cast into prison with their parents. Barbaric tortures have been inflicted upon Baha'is in the rural areas: other Baha'is have suffered torture in prison. Baha'is have been shot by assassins, lynched, stoned to death, beaten to death, and burned alive. In virtually every case, the Baha'i concerned could have saved himself or herself from death or injury simply by recanting.

Abduction of young girls. Religious extremists in Iran have demonstrated their willingness to go to any lengths in order to 'convert' Baha'is to Islam. Early in 1981, a young Baha'i girl was abducted in Kashan and, despite being under age, was forced into marriage with a Muslim. In two separate, later incidents, two Baha'i girls, aged 13 and 14 respectively, were abducted from school by their Islamic religious instructors. Their parents were later informed in writing that they had converted to Islam and wanted nothing more to do with their families. The parents have not been allowed to see or communicate with their daughters and their appeals to the civil and religious authorities have gone unheeded. In August 1981, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was quoted by Reuters press agency as flatly denying that any abductions had taken place at all.

Denial of education and vocational training. All Baha'i primary and secondary schools in Iran were closed by the Government in 1934 and the Baha'is have never since been allowed to operate their own educational establishments. Baha'is are admitted to education under the public education system but are frequently discriminated against under that system. Since the revolution, Baha'i schoolchildren have been put under constant pressure to recant their faith. Many educational institutions have introduced registration forms which specify that those seeking admission must belong to one of the recognized religions of the country. Large numbers of Baha'i students at all educational levels (including some in their final year of professional training) have been expelled from their places of learning solely on the grounds of their religion. Baha'i nurses, after completing their training, have been denied their diplomas. Baha'i students who received scholarships have been forced to repay the money to the Government. The Ministry of Education has prohibited the sending of funds to Baha'is studying outside Iran.

Deprivation of means of livelihood. Incited by the mullahs, riotous mobs in numerous towns and cities have looted Baha'i businesses of all kinds and, in many cases, wantonly destroyed them. Others have been confiscated by the Government, which has also frozen the business and personal bank accounts of Baha'is. In one

province, the business licences of all Baha'i traders have been withdrawn and their shops closed down. In the rural areas, the livestock and crops of Baha'i farmers have been stolen or destroyed, and the Baha'is themselves have been driven from their villages. A growing trend during 1981 has been the confiscation by the authorities of the movable and immovable properties of executed Baha'is, whose widows and children have thus been left homeless and without resources. Ever since the start of the revolution, a campaign has been under way to drive Baha'is from both public and private employment. Countless Baha'i civil servants have been arbitrarily dismissed and denied back pay and pensions. Pressure has been put upon non-Baha'i employers to dismiss their Baha'i employees, and the majority have concurred. Unable to support themselves or their families, thousands of Baha'is have been forced to leave Iran and settle in other countries. Their status and future has been rendered doubly precarious by a recent directive of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, which has ordered its consular representatives in foreign countries not to renew the passports of Baha'is residing within their jurisdiction. Of the Baha'is remaining in Iran, thousands have been deprived of their homes and means of livelihood and are now existing under conditions of increasing hardship and degradation.

Non-recognition of Baha'i marriages. There is no provision for civil marriage in Iran and the Baha'i marriage ceremony is not recognized as legal. Marriages between Baha'is can be registered only if the parties concerned are willing to recant their faith and marry according to the laws of one of the recognized religions. Many Baha'is have been denied birth certificates and passports because of the non-registration of their parents' marriage. On 20th October 1981, Voice of America reported in its Persian language programme that Iran's Central Revolutionary Committee was planning a campaign to arrest Baha'is on the grounds that their marriages were illegal and their children illegitimate.

Denial of freedom of religious practice. Public meetings, free expression of faith, places of worship, access to the press, free circulation of Baha'i literature and other materials are all proscribed to the Baha'i community.

[The following documents, published by the Baha'i International Community, are available for further reference:

Chronological summary of individual acts of persecution against Baha'is in Iran (from August 1978) - published November 1981

Official documentation testifying to discrimination against the Baha'i community since the creation of the Islamic Republic of Iran - a compilation, published December 1981]

FALSITY OF THE CHARGES LEVELLED AGAINST BAHAI'S IN IRAN

Baha'is are accused of being supporters of the late Shah, of having co-operated with and benefited from the former régime, and of being a political organization opposed to the present Iranian Government. This allegation is based upon the fact that the Baha'is did not actively oppose the Pahlavi régime and that some Baha'is held important positions in the civil service of that régime. In accordance with the teachings of their faith, Baha'is must show loyalty and obedience to the Government of the country in which they live, whatever its form or policies. Accordingly, they do not engage in subversive activities. In addition, Baha'is are forbidden by the laws of their faith from becoming involved in partisan politics or from holding any political post. These principles are fundamental and do not change

with changing governments. The conduct of the Baha'i community during the Pahlavi régime - and under the present régime - was, and is, entirely in accordance with these principles. Although a small number of Baha'is, because of their ability and integrity, were appointed by the former Government to important posts in such fields as medicine and administration, the Baha'i community as a whole suffered severe repression throughout the Pahlavi régime.

Baha'is are accused of collaboration with SAVAK. It can categorically be stated that the Baha'i community of Iran was never associated with the operations of SAVAK. Such activities and organizations are contrary to the most fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith. No evidence exists of any collaboration between SAVAK and the Baha'is. SAVAK officials such as Parviz Sabeti, who have been described as Baha'is, were not Baha'is. The alleged membership of such individuals in the Baha'i Faith stems from the fact that their fathers or families had once been Baha'is. It is, however, a basic principle of the Baha'i religion that the gift of faith springs from the free choice of the individual and cannot be automatically and blindly inherited from an earlier generation.

Baha'is are accused of being enemies of Islam. This charge springs from ignorance, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Baha'i Faith, which is portrayed in Iran as a heretical sect of Islam and, as such, is presumed to be dedicated to overthrowing Islam in its existing form. In fact, the Baha'i Faith is an independent world religion which, although having its roots in Islam and its birthplace in an Islamic country, is as distinct from Islam as Christianity is from Judaism. Whereas Muslims believe that divine revelation ended with Muhammad, Baha'is believe that religious revelation is continuous and progressive and that Baha'u'llah, the Founder of their faith, is the latest - but not the last - of the Divine Educators sent by God to guide mankind. Accordingly, Baha'is believe in the essential oneness of all the major religions of the world and honour and revere their Founders as divinely-inspired prophets. For a Baha'i to oppose, belittle or seek to destroy Islam, or any other religion, would thus be a denial of one of the most fundamental Baha'i principles.

Baha'is are accused of being agents of Zionism. This accusation is based on the fact that the Baha'i World Centre is located in Israel, and that many Baha'is visit Israel and send money there. The Baha'i World Centre was, in fact, established in the Holy Land in the last century, long before the State of Israel came into existence, and has nothing to do with Zionism. The Founder of the Baha'i Faith was exiled from Iran to the Holy Land, where He died in 1892. His Shrine was raised there, and the Holy Land thus became the world spiritual centre of the Baha'i Faith - and also (in compliance with the explicit requirements of Baha'i teachings) its world administrative centre as well. Baha'is from all parts of the world regularly travel to Israel to visit the Shrine of Baha'u'llah and other sites closely associated with their faith, and thousands of Iranian Baha'is made this pilgrimage when they were permitted by law to visit Israel. Contributions sent by Baha'is to the Baha'i World Centre are solely and exclusively for the upkeep of their holy places and for the administration of their faith. Almost all Baha'is in Iran have made such contributions, and this fact is often used to support charges against them of collusion with Israel.

Baha'is are accused of prostitution, immorality and adultery. Since the Baha'i marriage ceremony is not recognized in Iran, and no civil marriage exists, the Baha'is have been faced with the choice either of denying their faith in order to be married according to the rites of one of the recognized religions, or of remaining true to their beliefs and marrying according to Baha'i rites. They have consistently chosen the latter alternative - a course of action which the present régime regards as prostitution. Charges of immorality also arise from misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the basic Baha'i principle of the equality of men and women and rest upon the fact that, in accordance with this principle, there is no segregation of men and women during Baha'i gatherings, and that women serve alongside men on Baha'i administrative institutions. The Baha'i laws relating to chastity and marital fidelity in fact demand the highest standards of moral conduct on the part of all Baha'is.

CONCLUSION

A considerable volume of documentary and other evidence from Iran clearly indicates that, despite official denials, it is the policy of the Iranian Government to harass the Baha'is. If the Iranian Government continues to deny any form of protection to the Baha'i community, the outcome may well be the complete obliteration of this religious minority in Iran."

9. On 20 January 1982, the Baha'i International Community submitted additional information regarding developments affecting the Baha'i Community in Iran during December/January 1982, which is presented below:

"SECRET EXECUTIONS OF PROMINENT BAHAI'S:

Eight of the nine members of the national administrative council (National Spiritual Assembly) of the Baha'i Faith in Iran were secretly executed in Teheran on 27th December 1981. It was only by chance that the Baha'is learned of the executions and were able to locate the burial sites and see the burial certificates of the eight victims.

On 3rd January 1982, the President of the Supreme Court of Iran, Ayatollah Musavi Ardibili, denied that these executions had taken place - a statement which he implicitly retracted on 5th January, when he announced the execution of eight Baha'is on charges of 'spying for foreign powers'.

On 7th January, the Baha'is learned (again quite fortuitously) of the execution on 4th January of seven more Baha'is - six members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Teheran, and the woman believer in whose home they were arrested on 2nd November 1981.

The 27th December executions were particularly significant since they represented the second occasion on which the authorities had eliminated the membership of the National Spiritual Assembly. The nine previous members of this body, and two senior officers of the Baha'i Faith, were arrested on 21st August 1980 and subsequently disappeared, with the authorities denying all knowledge of their arrest or whereabouts. It is now believed that these eleven Baha'is, together with three other prominent believers who were kidnapped earlier, have almost certainly been the victims of secret executions.

Another secret execution came to light at the end of 1981 when a Baha'i family discovered from the records of a local cemetery that their kinsman had been executed in Teheran on 23rd October 1981. As far as can be ascertained, no trials were held and no charges brought against any of the secretly-executed Baha'is.

The total number of Baha'is killed for their religious beliefs since the start of the Islamic Revolution now stands at 97, with a further 14 presumed dead.

DENIAL OF BURIAL FACILITIES:

The Baha'i Cemetery in Teheran was seized on 5th December 1981 by order of the Central Revolutionary Court. Thirteen workers were arrested and the cemetery was closed, giving rise to fears that - as had happened in other places - the existing graves would be desecrated. The Baha'i cemetery in the nearby village of Baba-Salman was closed on 14th January 1982. The tens of thousands of Baha'is in the Teheran area are now forced to bury their dead in a barren stretch of land known locally as La'nat-Abad ('city of the accursed'), which is reserved by the authorities for those who are termed 'infidels'.

The bodies of Baha'is recently executed in Teheran have been taken to this so-called cemetery, where no facilities exist, and have been buried in their clothes in the bare earth, with none of their fellow-believers notified or present. The Baha'is have thus been prevented both from giving the victims a decent burial and from carrying out the religious practices prescribed by their Faith for the burial of the dead.

DESTRUCTION OF BAHÁ'Í HOLY PLACES:

The House of Bahá'u'lláh in Takur, where the founder of the Baha'i Faith spent his childhood, was totally demolished in December 1981, and the site of this holy place, with its land and gardens, was offered for sale by the authorities to the public. The roadworks initiated by the authorities to obliterate the site of the holiest Baha'i shrine in Iran, the House of the Báb in Shiraz, were reported to be fast approaching the precincts of the holy place.

INTIMIDATION OF INDIVIDUAL BAHÁ'ÍS:

Summary arrests of Baha'is continued throughout December and January. It is conservatively estimated that at least 150 Baha'is are currently in detention without charges. Mob attacks were common, particularly in the rural areas, where Baha'is were robbed of their possessions and frequently forced to flee for their lives.

The 1st December 1981 issue of the Teheran newspaper Kayhan reported that a Baha'i had recanted his faith in Evin Prison in the presence of the religious judge Ayatollah Muhammadi Gilani. This confirmed earlier reports that Baha'is were being put under pressure in prison to recant their faith in order to save themselves.

CONFISCATION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY:

The authorities continued their practice of confiscating the assets of executed Baha'is and their near relatives. The houses of some of the Baha'is executed in

Teheran were confiscated even before the authorities were willing to admit that the executions had, in fact, taken place. Confiscation by the Revolutionary authorities of the homes of Baha'is was common in many parts of Iran.

DEPRIVATION OF MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD:

Dismissals of Baha'is from public and private employment continued and many Baha'i business undertakings were forcibly closed. The 8th December issue of the newspaper Kayhan carried a directive from the Ministry of Labour that no one should entertain complaints or appeals from Baha'is who had been dismissed from their jobs or deprived of their pensions because of their religion, since dismissal for life from any form of government service had been approved by the Islamic Parliament as 'the punishment for anyone who is a member of the misguided Baha'i group'."