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Baha'is Persecution Continues In Iran

Oakland Baha'is received word recently that 24 more Baha'is, including 10 women, were imprisoned in Iran between August 3 and August 5.

"We don't know of any charges," said Betty Garcia, Baha'i spokesperson. "But we know that more than 250 Baha'is are in jails in Iran and none of them have been charged with any crimes."

Since mid-July, 63

Baha'is have been imprisoned. The recent arrests follow closely the late June abduction and disappearance of two prominent Baha'is in Tehran and mob attacks on July 1 which forced 130 Baha'i men, women, and children to flee their village near Sari. Moreover, 17 Baha'is, including seven women and three teenage girls, were hanged in June in Shiraz.

Iran's persecution of its 10,000-member Baha'i community has drawn the protests of President Reagan, the United States Congress, several nations' parliaments, the European Parliament, the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and Amnesty International.

Also, 89 professors of Iranian and Islamic studies in the United

States, have protested the persecution of the Baha'is in an open letter to the Iranian Government. "It is significant that the 89 men and women who signed the letter come from all parts of the Middle East, Europe, and North America. They are Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Baha'is," according to Garcia. The letter published in August 7

editions of The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, says that the Baha'is "have been systematically persecuted for the mere fact that they adhere to a religion other than Islam. Such persecution and these cruel and unjust executions seem to us a contradiction of all that is best in the traditions of Islam and the Iranian people."

The arrests of early

August took place in various parts of Iran: 13 were arrested in Urumiyeh, nine in Sari, one in Tehran, and one in Ramiyyan.

Since 1979, 142 Baha'is have been killed and 16 have disappeared. The Baha'i Faith is regarded as heresy by Iran's ruling clerics, who have launched an all-out campaign of persecution against the religion.

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