

BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

REPRESENTATIVE TO
THE UNITED NATIONS
DR VICTOR DE ARAUJO

545 EAST 40TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017 U.S.A.
TELEPHONE (212) 867-2930
CABLE: BAHAINCOM NEW YORK
TELEFAX: 866565

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NEWS RELEASE

The recent disturbances in Iran have attracted the attention of the world's news media and frequent mention has been made of the Bahá'ís of that country, their tenets and their activities.

Since the Bahá'ís in Iran have been persecuted for over a hundred years by fanatical elements in their country, the Bahá'í International Community is concerned that the recent developments in Iran may soon lead to a country-wide onslaught on the lives and properties of individual followers of the Faith. Indeed, already in many provinces in Iran frenzied mobs have ruthlessly attacked and injured Bahá'ís, threatened their lives, desecrated their Holy places and burned their houses, business premises, and livestock, caused them to flee from their homes, and have tried to force them to recant their Faith.

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A disturbing factor is that political adversaries are using the name of the Bahá'í Faith to discredit their political opponents. In order to inflame the passion of the fanatics, they refer to certain political leaders as Bahá'ís.

The Bahá'í International Community, and indeed Bahá'í institutions throughout the world, have noted with dismay and frustration the publication of misrepresentations of the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í International Community is particularly concerned at the erroneous impression being given to the world press of the clear position of the Bahá'í Faith on such basic issues as loyalty to government and non-involvement in political and subversive activities. To these have been added the distortions of truth reflected in the local press in Iran about the attitude of the Bahá'ís towards Islam.

The Bahá'í International Community categorically states that as an article of faith no Bahá'í is allowed to participate in partisan politics or to accept any political post. Furthermore, the Bahá'í International Community affirms that the Bahá'ís believe in the validity of all

divinely revealed religions, including Islam, and disclaim any intention to belittle any of the prophets of the past or to whittle down their teachings. It is hoped that the deliberate and vicious misuse of the name of the Bahá'í Faith and the misrepresentation of its teachings may not provide cause for further persecution and hardship for the Bahá'ís in Iran. The Bahá'ís are law-abiding citizens, loyal to their respective governments, and anxious to share wholeheartedly in whatever promotes the best interests of the countries in which they reside.

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