

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

886 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017 U.S.A.
TELEPHONE (212) 486-0860
CABLE: BAHAINCOM NEW YORK
TELEX: 860863

PRESS RELEASE

GENEVA (11 September 1980) -- The United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, at its thirty-third session now concluding, has expressed its "profound concern" for the safety of the Bahá'ís in Iran, both individually and as a community.

Mentioning specifically the recently arrested members of the National Bahá'í Administrative Council, the Sub-Commission further requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convey this concern to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, asking that government, which has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to grant "full protection of fundamental rights and freedoms to the Bahá'í religious community in Iran", as well as to protect "the life and liberty of the members of that Bahá'í community".

Earlier, as it discussed the matter of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Sub-Commission heard a statement given by Dr. Victor de Araujo, representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the U.N. Economic and Social Council, informing that U.N. body of human rights experts of the escalation of attacks against the lives and properties of the Bahá'ís

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and their communities in Iran during the last year and a half.* Dr. de Araujo appealed to the Sub-Commission for its assistance in taking whatever action it felt appropriate in this serious situation, which, "if unchecked, could result in the elimination of the Bahá'í religious minority in Iran."

In his statement, Dr. de Araujo pointed out that the accusations being constantly levelled against the Iranian Bahá'í community -- of conspiring against the sovereignty of Iran, its government and religion, and of prostitution and immorality -- charges which were also brought against two members of the Bahá'í administrative council of Tabriz who were executed on 13 July 1980, were without any foundation. He noted that Bahá'ís, both individually and collectively, are enjoined to obey the laws of their respective states and the authority of the duly constituted governments under which they live, are not allowed to participate in partisan politics or to accept any political post, and are committed to the highest standards of morality and rectitude in their public and private lives. Further, Dr. de Araujo stated that Bahá'ís believe in the essential oneness of all great religions, including Islam, and consider these Faiths as divine in origin, honoring and revering their Founders.

*Since then, seven prominent Bahá'ís were executed in Yazd on 8 September 1980.

Enclosures

For further information contact:

Dr. Marco Kappenberger
Representative to the United Nations
in Geneva
13 Dufourstrasse

Mrs. M. Fatjo
Alternate Representative to the United
Nations in Geneva
2, rue Gaudin

3005 Berne

1260 Nyon

Tel: 022-61.60.18 or
025-35.24.87