



PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
622 THIRD AVENUE  
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HUMAN RIGHTS

IN

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

*a review of the facts*

IN THE NAME OF GOD  
THE COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

The history of international organization in general and the United Nations in particular is unfortunately filled with shattered hopes and inspirations, and manipulated goals and objectives which in the beginning have arisen from the well-intentioned western ideals. It is well known that the Western industrial countries bear the most responsibility for these problems and the present inefficiency of many important bodies of the United Nations. They have nullified many efforts of UNCTAD, Committee on Disarmament, Committee on Indian Ocean, Conference on the Law of the Sea, and many other United Nations bodies to the degree that one can hardly find any international organization which has been exempted from the effects of the destructive measures taken by these Western countries in order to maintain their dominance through manipulation and political pressure. This destructive dominance has unfortunately been exerted so systematically on the different Human Rights Organs of the United Nations that the real purpose of the Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights have been ignored. It has become the practice that when a progressive regime takes the position of opposing imperialistic policies of the United States and its allies, it automatically becomes the target of baseless allegations concerning human rights. On the other hand, gross violations of human rights in countries whose rulers have shown their servitude to the Western imperialism remain undetected and unworthy discussion. Furthermore, the Western industrialized countries try to cover up their own violation of fundamental human rights by keeping the international bodies involved in lengthy discussion of baseless allegations of violation of human rights in progressive countries.

The example of the treatment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Human Rights Organs of the United Nations is most illustrative. Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the imperialist propaganda machinery started a large-scale campaign to discredit the Islamic Republic of Iran for alleged human rights violations. Baseless allegations concerning torture, arbitrary executions, religious persecution, which have not only been repeatedly rejected by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran but also challenged as to the value of their sources have been repeatedly made in the international Organizations. At the same time, the terrorist activities of those organizations which provide their baseless information to these Human Rights Organizations have never been considered. The brutal murders, tortures and massacres of the innocent people of Iran by these Organizations have been neglected, while the just punishment of the terrorists responsible for these atrocities are faced with condemnation and cries for the safeguard of human rights. This pamphlet attempts to present some facts concerning the allegations of Human Rights violations in Iran, and religious persecution. It is hoped that this pamphlet which will present that side of the issue which has always been intentionally neglected by imperialist media, and human rights bodies will enable those who have been the targets of imperialist manipulation to judge according to facts and not allegation.

## Section 1

### Opponents or Terrorists

This section presents a brief account of the anti-human activities of the counter-revolutionaries, and the MKO (Self proclaimed Mojahedean Khalg Organisation which is called Monafegheen - hypocrits - by our people), at their forefront.

Witnessing the horrible crimes, which are committed by the counter-revolutionaries who ironically claim to be defenders of people and self-appointed champions of human rights and freedoms, one cannot but wonder as to why the imperialist governments who so vociferously condemn "terrorism" in their own countries, not only remain silent in the case of these horrible crimes, but also in a variety of ways, support those responsible for these crimes. Furthermore, when these governments speak of the punitive actions against, and perhaps executions of these criminals by the Iranian Courts of Justice, they announce that those punished were merely opposed to the Islamic Republic, without making the slightest reference to their innumerable crimes, or even calling them terrorists; thus attempting to create in the reader, listener or viewer, the impression that these individuals have been punished solely for their opposition to the system of the Islamic Republic. These baseless allegations have continued despite the fact that the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Imam Khomeini have repeatedly announced that if these individuals give up their arms and their terrorist activities, they can even continue logic-bound opposition to the Islamic system in total freedom.

One of the crimes committed by these callous counter-revolutionaries is their bomb-explosion in Imam Khomeini Square in Tahran on 22 February 1982, which left 15 martyrs and over 60 others injured. Amongst those killed were young children, primary school students and some street-sweepers.

A similar incident which took place on the 6th September 1982 resulted in the mutilation to death of 20, and serious injury of more than a hundred innocent people when a powerful bomb exploded in Khayyam Street in Southern Tehran. Among the victims bodies, of a pregnant woman and a sucking baby and several elderly people were identified.

The latest instance of the inhuman massacres committed by the terrorists took place on 1 October 1982, through a devastating explosion in Imam Khomini Square. As a result, more than 60 were martyred, over 700 were injured, ten private automobiles, two double-decker buses and one bus along with their passengers, many hotels, shops and private houses were destroyed or badly damaged. Amongst those mutilated, the bodies of several sucking babies, children, elderly people, and many laborers were found. It should be noted that all the abovementioned explosions and similar ones have taken place in regions whose inhabitants are amongst the poor and very hardworking strata of our nation. Many of Western Radio and TV networks, and newspapers have remained dead silent in this respect, for obviously, they would not wish the public to become aware of the real terrorist nature of these supposed opponents of the Islamic Republic, thus revealing the dishonesty inherent in their propaganda.

Having been mutilated, burned, and charred in blind street explosions, and having lost their most beloved children under the torture and blind attacks of the inhuman and ferocious terrorists, our nation has been witnessing with astonishment that a parallel propaganda terrorism has been orchestrated abroad, seeking to back the internal terrorism by launching all sorts of allegations and lies against the Islamic Republic of Iran. While totally rejecting these allegations in different human rights fora, the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran have often challenged those representatives who have presented fabricated reports against the Iranian Government. to introduce formally the sources of these "reports", but instead of any due response to these challenges, the representatives of some western countries in the United Nations have continued their hostile attitudes towards the Islamic Revolution.

With regard to this deceitful approach adopted by some Western governments and mass media, one might ask: is it only the Europeans who are human beings and therefore worthy of being defended against the terrorists; and does the notion of "human rights" refer only to defending such criminals as Nassiri (Head of the SAVAK), Hoveida (Prime Minister of the ex-Shah), Khiyabani (Head of the Iranian terrorists) and the Bahai espionage network? One wonders if that sucking baby, that primary school student with books in his hand, that pregnant lady and that working street-sweeper, are not each a human being?

A Report of the MKO's Terrorist Activities,  
Massacres and Bombings

The following is a partial list of counterrevolutionary activities, randomly selected among some of the Major Terrorist Activities of the Counter-revolutionaries and Munafiqeen in the Iranian Year 1360 (1981).

March 30: The assassination attempt on Ayatollah Rabani Shirazi, one of the members of the Guardian Council.

April 4: The religious judge of Shahreza escaped an assassination attempt.

April 5: One clergy in Isfahan was assassinated.

April 6: The Commander of the Central Province Committee was attacked by armed men.

April 26 - An explosion by the counterrevolutionaries left 7 martyrs and 45 injured in Kerman's Azadi Square.

May 6: The body of a Bandar Abbas police officer was riddled by 19 terrorists' bullets.

June 8: The Shomal Textile Factory was set ablaze by counterrevolutionaries and millions of rials in damages were sustained.

June 21: The Deputy of Educational Affairs of the Saqes Educational Department was assassinated.

## Section 2

### Religious Persecution?

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a wide range of propaganda campaign was launched by the groups and circles opposed to this revolution (most of which groups and circles have been proven to have undeniable links with Imperialism and Zionism in a bid to belittle the achievements of, and magnify the natural and normal shortcomings following the revolution. Amongst such poisonous propaganda (for which they resort to every channel to convince the world opinion of its credibility) is the allegation of maltreatment and potential oppression of Iranian religious minorities by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus, they give the impression that the Islamic Revolution in Iran is opposed to the followers of other religions, and is intent on annihilating them by use of force. A long time ago, they began a comprehensive and calculated campaign to masquerade these nonsensical fabrications as truly genuine by resorting to all sorts of false accusation and spreading of custom-made lies. Included amongst the living examples of such malignant propaganda efforts are the allegations and accusations that are spread in connection with the Baha'i Sect in Iran. For instance, it has been alleged that the Courts of Justice of the Islamic Revolution in Iran pass death sentences for the followers of the said sect on invented charges: ostensibly for a variety of other reasons, but in reality because of their "religious" beliefs. In response to and rejection of this allegation, it is necessary to briefly consider the historical background of the Bahaim, and then examine the credibility of the aforementioned allegations.

### Founders of Bahaim

In the midst of 1st World War, the British Empire being one of the most wicked colonizer of all times, spent her utmost effort to defeat the army of the Ottoman Empire in order to take over the Islamic countries especially Palestine. In doing so, certain elements of the inhabitants of those lands were widely used as collaborators by British Government in covert activities against the Ottoman Empire.

Among those mercenaries, one character who had a reputation for whole-hearted loyalty and servitude, for the British Empire, was highly successful to render great services for the British army. And because of this complicity, as soon as Jamal pasha, the Head of the Ottoman Army became aware of this treason, decided to hang him near the Cermel Mountains in Palestine. 1] Soon after, the release of this news to the British Cabinet, by the army office of the British intelligence, Lord Curzon and Lord Lamington started an intensive campaign for the release of their friend. Due to this effort, Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, whose shameful role in the creation of the Zionist State is common knowledge, sent a

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1] Gharne Badee (God passes By) by Shoughi Rabbani (The Bahai Leader) - Vol. 3 - page 291 and 298.

telegram to General Allenby, the Commander of the British Army in Palestine to do his utmost effort to save the life of that loyal servant.

General Allenby, in turn, ordered the Head of the British Army in Haifa, Palestine, to take every necessary step for the prevention of the execution of the Ottoman's Court order.

After the defeat of the Ottoman army and the conquest of Haifa by the occupier army of Britain, that spy's life was spared from the verdict of Jamal Pasha.

Later on, General Allenby sent a telegram and informed the officials in London of the success of their covert effort.

When the occupier army of British ruled all over Palestine, that character greeted them with large supplies of food and grains which he had secretly been storing. In that critical period of the history because of the war, there was widespread famine and extreme shortage of food, not only in Palestine but all over the Ottoman Empire. The daily death of poor and unfortunate hungry inhabitants of Palestine was a common fact of life.

In these circumstances, when the wheat produced on such a land and precious water belonging to the hunger stricken Palestinians was stolen and stored by this spy to feed an aggressive foreign army, naturally such services were greatly appreciated by the British Government, so that, he was not only given huge amounts of gold, but also was rewarded the high medallion of "knighthood" and the honorary title of "Sir". These awards were presented to this foreign agent by the British Government through General Allenby and in return, he sent a letter of appreciation and gratitude to the British Government, in which he, inter alia says;

"Oh Lord, the shadow of justice has prevailed in this Holy Land and we thank and praise you for this.

Oh Lord assist the King of England, the Great Emporor, George the Fifth, with the blessed grace and endure his shadow firm over this land" 1]

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1] Gharne Badee (God Passes By) by Shoughi Rabbani Vol. 3 - Page 299

His Majesty's Government were so impressed by the services rendered to them by this faithful servant, that at the time of his funeral, the Minister of British Colonies, Windston Churchill, sent a telegram to Haifa to offer the condolences of the British Kingdom to his "followers" and finally, Herbert Samuel and Ronald Stores, representing the British Government personally participated in the funeral ceremony.

This faithful servant of the British Empire, a man who interpreted the British army's aggression and the defeat of the Muslim soldier as the prevalence of the shadow of "justice" and was grateful to 'Lord' for the occurrence of such events and above all, was wishing the "endurance of British Empire" over the entire Islamic Land of Palestine, was nobody but Mr. Abbas Afandi, the Son of the Founder of the Bahaiism, and a Bahai Leader himself.

#### Religious or Colonial Missionaries

These bitter events and the appearances of such great servants of colonialism was not limited to one or two particular regions. At a time when, a new spirit of self consciousness and political awareness in the colonized countries was drawing the attention of the oppressed people towards the plunder of their economic resources and the destruction of their moral and cultural fibres by the Western Colonialist, suddenly a number of self-proclaimed "prophets" appeared one after another in many of these colonized countries. On one hand, they were forbidding their followers from getting involved in the political affairs of their countries and were the staunch advocate of submission and obedience to their Government, no matter how corrupt or colonized they were, and on the other hand, by introducing new sets of devisive and foreign values in clear contradiction to the very tenant of people's fundamental belief, were able to create a wave of tension and division among the colonized people and thus diverted the attention of the victims from the main issues of the day, that is the plunder of their natural and human resources, by the European colonizers.

It was not a mere coincidence that suddenly, Bahaiism in Iran, Ghadianism in Pakistan along with many other similar doctrines by one account totalling around twelve appeared all across the newly awakened Muslim countries.

The peculiar insistence by the colonizers to support and spread these doctrines is a good indication of their belief in the success of manipulating the cultures and religion of colonized Muslim societies, so it is not strange at all, to see the leaders of the Bahai group acknowledged themselves, as to how the Colonial Government of England officially expressed her wishes that the leaders of the group "spend a while in India". 1] It is not unusual then to read from the writings of the Leaders of this group, that how anxious the Government of France was, to send their missionaries into her colonies, the Muslim African countries of Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. 2]

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1] and 2] Gharne Badi (God Passes By) by Shoughi Rabbani (The Bahai Leader) - Vol. 2 - Page 125 and 126.

It is quite natural for Muslims to see why the center of International Zionism, that is the occupier regime of Palestine, whose animosity and hostilities towards Muslims and Islam is an established fact, also is the fostering and nourishing cradle of Bahatism. The top leaders of Bahai group testify in their own words that the racist, aggressive Zionist State of Israel is their most secure and most dependable base, when Mrs. Rohiye Maxwell, an American Bahai leader openly admits:

"I prefer that our religion, grows in the youngest country, Israel. We have attachments and dependence to this country, and in fact, one should say our future and that of Israel is joined together like rings of a chain". 1]

All these facts point to one direction only: The Bahatism is not a religion, but rather, it is a political entity created and nourished by anti-Islamic and Colonial Powers.

#### Bahai's non-interference in Political Affairs.

Considering the aforementioned background, it is no wonder that the defunct Shah, the most trustworth friend of the Zionists, and the most faithful servant of Imperialism, appointed the Bahai's to the most sensitive and crucial posts of his brutal regime. Bahai leaders claim, hypocritically, that they do not interfere in Political Affairs, but at the time when the criminal Pahlavi regime was extending its fascism all across the country, denying the people of their most basic Human Rights, when even the mildest dissent was brutally answered by torture and murder, Bahais, formed the most powerful wing of the ruling regime, and never hesitated a moment to help it in its acts of suppression and oppression of freedom, liberty, human rights.

High positions, from the Prime Minister, to the Director General for Internal Security, in the infernal SAVAK, and from the key positions in the sensitive office of planning organisation to the armed forces of the Shah, to his personal advisors, guards and even physician, were all occupied by the Bahais.

The Shah was so assured of their loyalties to him that among the tens of thousands of Iranian doctors, he chose Dr. Ayadi also a Bahai as his own private physician and the most trusted advisor, who beside this job also had 23 more honorary positions in the Shah's army, he was also the man behind the whole pharmaceutical market.

Also, to name only a few, the Shah's brotherinlaw, General Khattani, the Commander of Iran National Airforce, General Sanai, Minister of War, Mansur Ruhani, the shah's Minister of Agriculture for 13 years, Mrs. Parsa, Minister of Education and General Nassiri, head of SAVAK (mark you, non-intervention in politics) were all Bahai's holding key figures in controlling and maintaining the Shah's regime. Irrespective of all these undeniable facts, the Bahai group have claimed in a report submitted to the Human Rights

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1] Akhbar Amri Magazine (The Official Voice of the National Center of Iranian Bahais) - Issue No. 10, 1962 - Page 601.



Sub-Commission that according to their beliefs, they "Abstain from Partisan Politics". One might ask them to explain the role of Mr. Amir Abbas Hoveyda, also a Bahai who ran the political machine of the Zionist and U.S. supported Shah for 13 years, as Prime Minister, against the wishes and aspirations of the whole oppressed nation of Iran who were totally opposed to the criminal Shah. If this is not active politics, then what is it? It is quite amusing that in the same report the Bahai's have tried to portray all the Bahais as "gentle" and "peace-loving" and yet every Iranian knows that the Director General of SAVAK, the man behind the torture and murder of thousands of Iranian people was nobody but fugitive Parviz Sabeti, a wellknown Bahai, now living in Israel.

Undeniable, authentic documents captured by our revolutionary people from Savak Headquarters and centres throughout Iran and official confidential or secret papers and documents and hundreds of actual authoritative evidence prove, all the more, the fact that the collaboration of the Bahai circles with Zionism, has been and still is, a very systematic one.

The following are a few selected excerpts of the aforementioned documents. However, the original copy of all such documents are available in the Islamic Republic of Iran Mission and are at the disposal of any interested delegations in case a thorough examination of the documents would be desired.

1. Savak document No. 20-1454, August 1967 reveals that during the 1967 war of Zionist aggression, millions of dollars were collected by Bahai leadership in Iran, and sent directly to Israel in order to help Zionists in their aggression. That is why the late President Nasser of Egypt accused them of being "Israeli spies".

2. Savak document No. H-9864 October 19th, 1968, reveals that how high rank army officials who were purposely chosen among Bahais used to persecute Moslem officials.

3. Savak document No. H-6063 March 31st, 1971 shows clearly how the Zionist regime regarded the then then Prime Minister of Iran, Amir Abas Hoveida who was a prominent Bahai for his endeavours in helping the Zionist regime with cheap oil transactions. According to this document, the Zionist government granted Hoveyda a very large piece of land in Palestine as a sign of Gratitude for his most friendly policy.

It is very interesting that Savak writes in Mr. Hoveyda's file "he has such and such a land in Israel, etc..

4. Savak document No. 3 H-20299 November 20th, 1978 shows how Bahais were successful in sending millions of dollars to Israel and being appointed to the very important economic and political positions in Iran. One document reveals that normally all the financial support of the Zionist regime were rendered under the pretext of helping the Bahai shrine which is in Israel.

5. According to document SD No. 9 in these series, the Bahai leaders received secret information on the Iranian army, their weapons and strength, which were not used as religious recitation in Bahai circles, but were kindly dispatched to Israel (another non-interference in politics).

6. In Savak Document No. H7-321, one of the Bahai speakers asserts "In every Iranian Governmental office, specially military offices, we should have a spy in order to collect all necessary information".

These are but a very few of the documents selected amongst hundreds of others, which clearly and unequivocally show how a very sophisticated and systematic espionage network has been established by the Bahais in order to deliver all updated information directly to the Israeli authorities.

Considering the aforementioned facts, and in response to the propaganda accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran of the so-called "religious intolerance", the following points may be mentioned:

1. According to the sacred precepts of Islam, and the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, e.g., Article 29 of the Constitution which prohibits inspection of other people's beliefs and prosecution of individuals on the ground of their particular set of beliefs, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran never sentences or punishes any individual on the charge of holding a particular ideology or following a particular faith. Hence, although the Constitution does not recognise Baha'ism as a religion, and therefore Baha'ism lacks any official status in Iran, nevertheless, its followers have never been prosecuted, nor punished, merely and simply because of their beliefs. And in principle, being a Baha'i has not been considered an offense by the Law, so that the Baha'is may be charged with the offense and prosecuted and punished accordingly.

2. As in most other countries, the Criminal Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran regards any activity that is against the national security and any conspiracy against the Islamic Republic of Iran, and any involvement in espionage for foreign agents, as crimes and therefore liable to punishment. If, therefore, individuals are arrested and punished in this respect, their punishment will have no connection with their beliefs, and will be merely a consequence of their criminal acts in violation of the Law and against the interests of the country. If amongst such convicts there happen to be some individuals who are linked to the aforementioned sect, such linkage or belief will not alter the quality or quantity of their punishment at all. As the highest judicial authority in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Moussari Ardebili stated in his letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 14th September 1981 (this letter has been circulated as U.N. document E/CN.4/Human Rights Subcommission 2/415-E/CN.4/151/6): "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 this faith and shall be entitled to all the facilities he needs for his defence, in no circumstances may he be denied those rights."

A most convincing witness to this claim is the documents and papers available at the relevant courts of justice in Iran, such as the interrogation documents, and the confessions made by the accused themselves.

Any person, in whatever profession, with whatever ideology and school of thought, regardless of his/her beliefs and intellectual tendencies, who is in any way or manner involved in conspiratorial connections with foreigners, or in activities against the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, will be considered criminal by the law.

Determination of the quality of the crime and the extent of punishment is the responsibility of the judicial authorities in the country, who will make their decisions in accordance with the text of the law concerned.

3. It is worth mentioning here that a number of Baha'is, whose general or counter-revolutionary crimes have been proven in Islamic Courts of Justice, have been granted a share from the bountiful Islamic amnesty and forgiveness. Only a small number of the followers of this belief, who have committed serious crimes, all of which have been proven in the court with sufficient evidence, thus not leaving any room for amnesty, have been given heavier sentences.

4. If, as alleged by some individuals, the mere pursuit of the said belief were to constitute a crime in itself, no room, nor indeed any necessity, would have been left for amnesty or commutation of sentences. And the very fact that the accused are tried not because of their beliefs but owing to having committed criminal acts, provides the strongest testimony and evidence in refutation of such baseless allegations.

5. Trial of an individual or individuals due to their particular ideology or set of beliefs would be indicative of the weakness and inadequacy of the ideology prevailing that society and the revolution thereof; while it is a considered opinion that the Islamic ideology is the strongest of ideologies, and the beliefs of a few hundred followers of the Bahai's sect, which has no logical and politico-ideological justification, is not reckoned to be a danger to us; and therefore, there will be no need for inspection of their beliefs and putting on trial the followers of the said sect simply for holding such beliefs.

6. While it is claimed that tens of thousands of Baha'is are presently living in Iran, if the mere pursuit of Baha'is ideology were to constitute a crime and accordingly punishable, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, thousands of the followers of the sect in question ought to have been punished by now; whereas, these very claimers, protesters and controversializers raise the question of conviction and punishment of only a few Baha'is and protest against it.

7. In conclusion, a brief account of the cases of some of the accused Baha'is, who had been proved guilty in the Court of Justice, but not for their beliefs, and whose sentences were commuted for the reasons stated hereunder, will be presented below in order for the matter to be made crystal clear that not a single person in the Islamic Republic of Iran is tried and punished merely because of his/her particular ideology or set of principles.

On 11.12.1359 (Iranian Calendar) 2.3.1980) Messers:

1. Enayatollah Ehsanian (son of Mohammad);
2. Ja'far Sha'er-zadeh (son of Mostafa);
3. Sattar Khosh-Khu (son of Ali);
4. Enayatollah Mehdi-zadeh (son of Kheirollah);
5. Mohammad-Reza Hesami (Fartoosh) son of Amir) were summoned to the court for trial.

Regarding the accused in number one, above for lack of sufficient evidence to prove his involvement in campaigns against and hostility towards Islam, and in acts detrimental to the Muslims, he was released on parole.

Ja'far Sha'er-zadeh, who was a member of the department of statistics and a link between the Shira/circle and the central national circle, and who had been making trips to Israel and India spreading anti-Islamic propaganda, was released on parole on the grounds that he suffered from severe destitution and therefore, he had done all that for the remuneration he received from its board of trustees.

The accused in number three, above, who had sent large sums of money from the Iranian Muslims treasury to Israel and the BBC Radio and had been found guilty, and about whose links with the Zionists and Israel there is not the slightest shadow of doubt, was given a two-year prison sentence and dismissal from the university.

The accused in numbers four and five above, who had committed crimes, similar to those of numbers one, two and three above, were also released. Only the accused in number five, who had played an active part in the previous regime in crushing the clergy in general and persecution of a clergyman named Hojjatol-Islam Fali, in particular, was found guilty by the court, and was sent merely to the repayment of the embezzled property, as well as his debt of 240,000 Iranian Rials (approx. 160 Rials to the pound) to the Vahaj Company, and a 20-year compulsory stay in Tehran. He was thus released from jail.

As can be observed, these convicts, having committed crimes which would have provided sufficient grounds for heavy penalties during the time of any revolution, have nevertheless been set free or given short term prison sentences or sentenced to a repayment of the property plundered by themselves, or made to stay for a while in Tehran or in the provinces while there remains absolutely no doubt as to all these individuals being Baha'is, particularly in the light of their forthright confession to this effect. And therefore, if mere belief in Baha'ism were to have been regarded as a punishable crime in Iran, all the abovementioned individuals would have been given equal and heavy sentences.

The representatives of Islamic Republic of Iran have so often explained these undeniable facts in Human Rights fora, but despite all these sincere efforts, the propagation and repetition of malicious lies and groundless accusations about the maltreatment of the followers of other religions or doctrines have been continued by some anti-Islamic entities. This has no interpretation, but a blatant misuse of the Human Rights fora for definite and wellknown political purposes, which if continued, may result in turning such fora into mere means of political pressure in the hands of those who do not favour independence and freedom of their former cultural and political colonies.

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13 December 1982

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SITUATION OF THE BAHÁ'IS IN IRAN February-December 1982

The following information concerning violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the members of the Baha'i religious minority in Iran is submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1982/27.

Background. Since the inception of the Baha'i Faith in 1844, fanatical elements among the fundamentalist Muslim clergy in Iran have agitated ceaselessly for the suppression of a religion they categorize as heretical. As a result, the Baha'is have, for over a century, been the most persecuted minority in Iran. The Islamic Revolution, which brought to power those very elements most bitterly opposed to the Baha'i Faith, signalled the start of a massive and blatant campaign of religious persecution which, if unchecked, threatens the eradication of the Baha'i religious minority in Iran.

In pursuit of its goal of eradicating the Baha'i minority and obliterating all traces of the Baha'i Faith from the land of its birth, the government of Iran has confiscated and/or destroyed all Baha'i community properties and holy places in Iran, has summarily executed the leaders of the Baha'i community (both national and local) and has brought every kind of pressure to bear upon the rank and file of believers (including denial of their fundamental rights and freedoms) in an effort to compel them to recant their faith.

The background to the situation, and the persecutions suffered by the Baha'i community in Iran from the start of the Islamic Revolution to the end of January 1982, are more fully described in a report submitted to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session. <sup>1/</sup> The following information updates that report.

Summary executions. Since January 1982, 19 Baha'is have been summarily executed in Iran and two murdered - one shot dead by revolutionary guards when he identified himself as a Baha'i, and one slain by an unknown assassin who pinned a note to the body saying that the victim had been killed because he was a Baha'i.

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<sup>1/</sup> E/CN.4/1517 - Note of the Secretary-General on the Treatment of the Baha'is in Iran, 31 December 1981

All the executed Baha'is were prominent believers and seven were members of local Baha'i administrative institutions. Some were executed following trials whose proceedings (if any) have never been reported, and their families received no notification of their execution or burial. The executions of others (allegedly found guilty on political charges) were deferred while intense pressure was put upon them to recant their faith. Increasingly, however, all pretence has been dropped and, as evidenced by newspaper reports of the court verdicts, 2/, Baha'is have been condemned to death on charges related solely to their Baha'i activities.

It was on such charges that five Baha'is were condemned to death by the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Shiraz in September 1982. The trial judge offered all five 30 minutes in which to recant and go free, but all five immediately reaffirmed their faith. Two have since been executed (on 16 and 21 November respectively) and the remaining three are still in prison under sentence of death.

Summary arrests. Following repeated waves of summary arrests throughout 1982, it is now estimated that at least 200 Baha'is are currently being held without charges in Iranian prisons. A large proportion were formerly members of local Baha'i administrative institutions. Over 70 Baha'is were arrested during a recent series of night raids in Shiraz. In view of the recent executions in Shiraz, there are grave fears for their safety.

Intimidation of individual Baha'is continued remorselessly throughout 1982. Physical intimidation was common: hundreds of Baha'is were harassed, beaten and driven from their homes because they refused to recant their faith. In Hisar, Khurasan, the entire Baha'i population was forced to leave the town. In Saysan, fifty Baha'is were brutally coerced into signing prepared letters of recantation and were forced to flee the town when, following their release, they wrote letters to the government affirming their faith and protesting the treatment they had received.

Large-scale confiscations of the homes and possessions of Baha'is, the freezing of the bank accounts of Baha'is, and dismissals of Baha'is from employment also continued unabated throughout 1982. By June 1982, all Baha'is employed by the government (including doctors, nurses and school teachers) had been dismissed from their jobs, and the pensions of all retired Baha'i civil servants had been terminated. In most cases, the dismissal or termination notices contained the provision that the individual's job or pension would be restored to him if he would publicly recant his faith. 3/ The authorities also continued their practice of confiscating or denying trading licences to businesses owned by Baha'is, and of putting pressure upon non-Baha'i employers to dismiss their Baha'i employees.

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2/ Documentation available for inspection - see page 73 of "The Baha'is in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority", published by the United Nations Office of the Baha'i International Community, first published in June 1981, revised and updated July 1982.

3/ Documentation available for inspection - see pages 75-79 of the above publication.

As a result of these actions by the revolutionary authorities, thousands of homeless and destitute Baha'is have been thrown upon the mercy of their relatives and friends - who are themselves in imminent danger of becoming victims of the government's anti-Baha'i campaign.

Denial of education to increasing numbers of Baha'i children persisted throughout 1982. Students at all educational levels were expelled on the grounds of their religion. 4/ Students were told that they would be permitted to remain at their places of education if they would agree to recant their faith. A report was received that, during 1981, Baha'i university students had been denied the opportunity of taking their final examinations and that some who had already taken and passed their examinations had been refused their degrees.

The government of Iran has repeatedly denied that it is engaged in religious persecution against the Baha'is - most recently in a document circulated to representatives to the Third Committee of the 37th General Assembly. 5/

In this document, the government of Iran states categorically that no Baha'i has been persecuted or punished because of his religious beliefs and that any Baha'i sentenced to death has been found guilty of a serious crime, duly proven in a court of law. This assertion is contradicted by all the evidence emanating from Iran and, most compellingly, by the following facts:

- condemned Baha'is are given the choice of recanting their faith or facing execution;
- in the very few cases in which Baha'is have recanted, they have immediately been released and all charges against them dropped;
- a number of Baha'is have recently been condemned to death on charges related solely to their Baha'i activities.

To justify its continuing persecution of the entire Baha'i community in Iran, the government of Iran, in the same document, has had recourse to the blanket accusation that the Baha'i Faith is not a religion at all but is a political organization, actively engaged in international espionage on behalf of the government of Israel. The Baha'i International Community categorically denies these allegations. 6/

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4/ Documentation available for inspection - see page 74 of "The Baha'is in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority", published by the United Nations Office of the Baha'i International Community, first published in June 1981, revised and updated July 1982.

5/ Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran - a review of the facts, published by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, circulated on 23 November 1982

6/ Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations made against the Baha'i Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, published by Baha'i International Community, 30 November 1982



The tenets of the Baha'i Faith prohibit its followers from becoming involved in politics or from holding any political post. Likewise, Baha'is are forbidden to participate in any form of subversive activity and are obliged to show loyalty and obedience to the government of the country in which they live, whatever its form or policies.

The alleged connection between the Baha'i Faith and Israel rests upon the fact that the Baha'i World Centre is in Israel (although it is there by historical accident and was established in 1868, long before the State of Israel came into existence) and that Baha'is the world over send contributions to their World Centre for the maintenance of their holy places in Israel (although the followers of other religions - including Islam - send contributions for the upkeep of their own holy places in Israel without being accused by the Iranian government of being supporters of Zionism).

These charges, and other accusations frequently levelled against the Baha'is by the government of Iran, are more fully detailed, explained and refuted in the report submitted to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session. 7/

Since that report was considered, the situation of the Baha'is in Iran has steadily deteriorated. Recent developments indicate that the government of Iran has no intention either of admitting that the persecution of the Baha'is is inspired by primitive religious fanaticism, or of putting an end to its relentless persecution of an innocent and defenceless minority.

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7/ E/CN.4/1517 - Note of the Secretary-General on the Treatment of the Baha'is in Iran, 31 December 1981

# BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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Representative  
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Alternate Representative  
Mr. Gerald Knight

10 December 1982

Summary of  
STATEMENT IN REBUTTAL  
OF ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH BY THE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
General Assembly, 37th session, November 1982

In a document 1/ circulated to representatives to the Third Committee of the 37th session of the General Assembly on 23 November 1982, the Islamic Republic of Iran made a number of false and damaging statements concerning the nature of the Bahá'í Faith and the activities of its followers. The Bahá'í International Community has published a detailed refutation of these false statements 2/, of which the following are the main points.

The report alleges that the Bahá'í Faith is a political entity "created and nourished by anti-Islamic and colonial powers" and that the Bahá'í community has established "a very sophisticated and systematic espionage network".

The Bahá'í International Community categorically denies these allegations. The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion and its followers are forbidden, by the laws of their faith, from becoming involved in partisan politics or in any form of subversive activity.

The activities of Bahá'í communities in every part of the world are open to scrutiny and, in view of the serious nature of the charges made by the government of Iran, the Bahá'í International Community invites the establishment of an impartial body of inquiry to mount a thorough investigation into Bahá'í activities.

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1/ "Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran - a review of the facts", published by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations. Circulated in the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 23 November 1982.

2/ "Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations Made against the Bahá'í Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations", published by the Bahá'í International Community, 30 November 1982.

All the allegations made against the Bahá'ís in Iran are based on deliberate misinterpretations of the aims and purposes of the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings. The most common charges are repeated in Iran's new report, which accuses Bahá'ís of:

- (a) being political supporters of the late Shah;
- (b) being a political organization opposed to the present Iranian government;
- (c) collaborating with SAVAK;
- (d) being enemies of Islam;
- (e) being agents of Zionism.

All these charges have been explained and refuted by the Bahá'í International Community in its publications 3/. The new charges contained in Iran's latest report can be answered as follows:

The report alleges that 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, was an agent of the British government in Palestine during World War I and that he was protected, financially rewarded and knighted by the British government in recognition of his services. The report quotes the names of several prominent Britons associated with 'Abdu'l-Bahá as evidence of his clandestine connections with the British.

The facts: 'Abdu'l-Bahá never received money from the British government and the knighthood conferred upon him was in recognition of his humanitarian services to the poor and needy in Palestine during World War I. The intervention of the British government to protect his life was inspired by and in response to appeals from the British Bahá'ís, who had learned that the Turkish commander, Jamal Pasha, had publicly vowed to crucify 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his family on Mount Carmel. During his years in the Holy Land, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in contact not only with prominent Britons but also with eminent personalities, scholars and leaders in many parts of Europe and the Middle East. His funeral was attended not only by the two British officials named in the report but also by the chiefs of the Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other religious communities in the Holy Land, and by notables from all strata of Palestinian society.

The report alleges that the Bahá'í Faith was used by the British and French governments as a tool for colonial expansion, and that invitations to Bahá'ís to "spend a while in India" and to teach their faith in North Africa provide proof of this.

The facts: Both these incidents are taken from Bahá'í books and quoted out of context. In the first, the British Consul-General in Baghdad offered humanitarian aid and residence in India to the persecuted and imprisoned Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'u'lláh declined these offers and chose to remain a prisoner in Baghdad. In the second case, 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentioned in a letter to one of his followers that the French ambassador in Teheran (who greatly admired the Bahá'í teachings) had suggested that Bahá'ís might go to Tunisia and teach their faith there. To suggest that either of these

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3/ "The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority", published by the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community, first published in June 1981, revised and updated July 1982.

incidents provides evidence of political collusion between the Bahá'í Faith and the colonial powers is clearly ridiculous.

The report alleges that, despite the laws of their faith forbidding involvement in partisan politics or the holding of any political post, certain Bahá'ís held high political office during the reign of the late Shah.

The facts: During the reign of the Shah, it was common for unscrupulous politicians to attempt to discredit their political opponents by accusing them of being Bahá'ís. Of the eight persons named in the report, six were never Bahá'ís and never claimed to be. The seventh had once been a Bahá'í but was expelled from the Bahá'í community when he accepted ministerial office in the government of the Shah. The eighth, who was indeed a Bahá'í, served in the non-political position of personal physician to the late Shah.

The report alleges that Bahá'ís are agents and political supporters of Zionism, and that the Bahá'í community financially supports the Israeli government.

The facts: The presence of the Bahá'í World Centre in Israel, and the absence of any connection between the Bahá'í Faith and Zionism, are fully explained in other documents, available for reference 4/. Funds sent by Bahá'ís the world over to the Bahá'í World Centre are used exclusively for the maintenance of their holy shrines and historic sites and for the administration of their faith, just as funds are sent by Christians and Muslims around the world for the upkeep of their holy places in the Holy Land.

The report alleges that various documents purportedly extracted from the files of SAVAK, and summarized in the report, prove the involvement of Bahá'ís in a variety of anti-Islamic activities.

It is impossible for the Bahá'í International Community to comment upon documents it has not seen. It might be asked, however, how and why--since the present Iranian government has itself discredited SAVAK--the documentation produced by this organization has suddenly become relevant and "authentic" where Bahá'ís are concerned? The hostility of SAVAK towards the Bahá'í community, and the collaboration between SAVAK and fanatical anti-Bahá'í organizations, are well documented. 5/

The report alleges that certain Bahá'ís charged with a variety of offences were given very lenient sentences or were released, and quotes names and details.

The facts: The summary trials referred to took place in Shiraz in February 1980. Of the four Bahá'ís reportedly released, two are still in prison, and the fifth--reportedly sentenced to two years in prison--was summarily executed in Shiraz on 30 April 1981.

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4/ E/CN.4/1517 - Note by the Secretary-General on the treatment of the Bahá'ís in Iran, 31 December 1981.

"The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority" published by the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community, first published in June 1981, revised and updated July 1982

5/ ibid.

The report alleges (and the cases quoted above are intended to support this allegation) that no Bahá'í has been prosecuted or punished simply because of his religion, and that any Bahá'í who has suffered death or imprisonment has been guilty of a criminal offence, duly proven in a court of law.

The facts: This argument does not explain the pervasive and continuing persecution of the entire Bahá'í community in Iran. It ignores the fact that no evidence has ever been adduced to support any of the charges brought against those Bahá'ís who were executed, and also ignores the fact that, in the very few cases in which a Bahá'í has been willing to recant his faith, he has immediately been released and all charges against him dropped - while his fellow believers who refused to recant have been executed. The argument does not explain the disappearance, following their arrest, of all nine members of the national governing body of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran, nor the secret execution in Teheran (initially denied by the authorities) of eight of their successors.

Furthermore, the argument that there is no large-scale persecution of the Bahá'í community on religious grounds is singularly unconvincing in the light of the fact that all Bahá'í community properties and holy places in Iran have been confiscated and/or destroyed, and that thousands of innocent Bahá'ís have been deprived of their fundamental human rights in a variety of dehumanizing ways, including dismissal from employment, denial of pensions, confiscation of private property and denial of education to children.

Details of the persecution of the Bahá'í community by the government of Iran, fully supported by documentary evidence from Iran, are on record and are available for reference. 6/

Despite the repeated denials of the Iranian government, it is clear that the persecution of the Bahá'ís is based solely upon their religious beliefs. It is equally clear that the allegations contained in the November 1982 report circulated by Iran represent an attempt to conceal, and to divert international attention from, the fanatically religious motivation of the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran, and to undermine the good reputation which the Bahá'í community enjoys throughout the world.

The Bahá'í International Community emphatically refutes all the charges levelled against the Bahá'ís by the Iranian government and strongly appeals for the establishment of an independent body to investigate the entire situation.

6/ E/CN.4/1517 - Note by the Secretary-General on the treatment of the Bahá'ís in Iran, 31 December 1981.

"The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority" published by the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community, first published in June 1981, revised and updated July 1982

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Representative  
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Dr. Victor de Araujo  
Alternate Representative  
Mr. Gerald Knight

14 December 1982

Mr. Kurt Herndl  
Director, Centre for Human Rights

Dear Mr. Herndl,

In a document circulated to representatives to the Third Committee of the 37th session of the General Assembly on 23 November 1982, the Islamic Republic of Iran made a number of false and damaging statements concerning the nature of the Bahá'í Faith and the activities of its followers. The Bahá'í International Community has published a detailed refutation of these false statements in a document entitled "Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations made against the Bahá'í Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations" 30 November 1982, a copy of which is enclosed together with relevant parts of the Iranian document.

Since this document is in excess of 1500 words, we have prepared and enclose a 1500-word summary of this statement. We would be grateful if, pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1296 (XLIV), this summary could be circulated as a written statement of the 39th session of the Commission on Human Rights.

Yours sincerely,

Gerald Knight

GK:mep

- enclosures:
1. "Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations made Against the Bahá'í Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, General Assembly, 37th session, November 1982"
  2. Excerpts from "Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran - a review of the facts" circulated in the Third Committee of the General Assembly by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
  3. "Summary of Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations made against the Bahá'í Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, General Assembly, 37th session, November 1982" dated 10 December 1982.
  4. "The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority", revised and updated edition, 1982.

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Representative  
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Mr. Gerald Knight

14 December 1982

Mr. Kurt Herndl  
Director, Centre for Human Rights

Dear Mr. Herndl,

Since the adoption of resolution 1982/27 on the human rights situation in Iran by the Commission on Human Rights we have, as you may know, kept Mr. Buffum's office regularly informed of the situation of the members of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran. Letters were addressed to Mr. Buffum's office dated 27 January 1982, 12 February 1982, 26 May 1982, 16 August 1982, 24 November 1982, 3 December 1982, 6 December 1982 and 7 December 1982. The information contained in these letters has been included in the document listed as enclosure no. 1.

It is in the hope that it may be useful to the Centre in connection with the implementation of the above resolution, particularly in the preparation of the report called for in operative paragraph no. 4, that we now enclose for your information the following items:

1. A document entitled "Developments in the Situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran, February - December 1982" -- prepared to update the information contained in Commission document E/CN.4/1517, Note by the Secretary-General entitled "Treatment of the Bahá'ís in Iran".
2. Document entitled "References made to human rights violations in Iran at the 38th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights", which includes the full texts of statements made by the Bahá'í International Community on agenda items 20 and 12.
3. A document entitled "Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran - a review of the facts" circulated to the Third Committee of the 37th General Assembly by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations.
4. A document entitled "Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations made against the Bahá'í Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, General Assembly, 37th session, November 1982" dated 30 November 1982.
5. A document entitled "Summary of Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations made against the Bahá'í Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations". This document is a 1500-word summary of the statement in no. 4 above.

Mr. Kurt Herndl  
14 December 1982

Page 2

This summary is also being sent with a separate covering letter to the Centre for Human Rights for circulation at the Commission on Human Rights pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1296.

6. A document entitled "The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority", revised and updated edition, July 1982. We would like to draw your attention in particular to Appendix 4, pages 71 - 80, which contains a number of official publications from various government departments in Iran, together with court verdicts relating to Bahá'ís published in Iranian media. These items testify to official discrimination against the Bahá'ís in Iran. Copies of the actual documents reproduced here are available for inspection if required.

We hope that the above materials are helpful in the preparation of the report called for in resolution 1982/27.

Yours sincerely,

Gerald Knight

GK:mep  
enclosures



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30 November 1982

## STATEMENT IN REBUTTAL OF ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST THE BAHÁ'I FAITH BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS General Assembly, 37th session, November 1982

In a document entitled "Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran - a review of the facts" circulated to representatives to the Third Committee of the 37th session of the General Assembly at United Nations Headquarters on 23 November 1982, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran made a number of false and damaging statements concerning the nature of the Bahá'í Faith and the activities of its followers. The Bahá'í International Community wishes to refute these false statements and to present the true facts.

(For ease of reference, copies of the relevant pages of Iran's report are attached).

1. *The Bahá'í Faith is accused of being "a political entity created and nourished by anti-Islamic and Colonial Powers" (see page 27 paragraph 3 of the report). Reference is made to "the Bahá'í espionage network" (p.3. para 2) and it is alleged that "a very sophisticated and systematic espionage network has been established by the Bahá'ís" (p.29 para 2). Other references of a similar nature appear elsewhere in the report.*

The Bahá'í International Community categorically denies these allegations. Participation in partisan politics, and involvement in any form of subversive activity, are both totally forbidden to Bahá'ís in accordance with the most fundamental principles of their faith.

Bahá'í communities exist in countries throughout the world and their activities are known to the governments of these countries to be non-political, non-partisan and peaceful.

The activities of Bahá'í communities in every part of the world are open to scrutiny and, in view of the serious nature of the charges made by the Iranian government in this world forum, the Bahá'í International Community invites the establishment of an impartial body of inquiry to mount a thorough investigation into the activities of the Bahá'í world community.

2. All the allegations made against the Bahá'ís in Iran are based on deliberate misinterpretations of the aims and purposes of the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings. The most common charges levelled against the Bahá'ís - and repeated in Iran's new report - are as follows:

1. Bahá'ís are accused of being political supporters of the late Shah and of having benefited from the former regime.
2. Bahá'ís are accused of being a political organization opposed to the present Iranian government.
3. Bahá'ís are accused of collaboration with SAVAK.
4. Bahá'ís are accused of being enemies of Islam.
5. Bahá'ís are accused of being agents of Zionism.

All these allegations are explained and convincingly refuted in the Bahá'í International Community's publication "The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority", revised and updated July 1982, pages 19 to 24.

The new and/or very specific allegations contained in Iran's latest report can be answered as follows:

3. It is alleged that the son of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith was an agent of the British government, engaged in "covert activities against the Ottoman Empire" in Palestine; that, during World War I, he was "highly successful to render great services for the British army", including supplying the army with "large supplies of food and grains which he had secretly been storing"; and that the British authorities protected his life and gave him "huge amounts of gold" and a knighthood as a reward for his espionage activities. (See pages 24 and 25 of the report).

These alleged "facts" are gross distortions of the truth.

'Abdu'l-Bahá (also known as Abbas Effendi), the son of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, was not a British spy. The knighthood conferred upon him by the British government in 1920 was in recognition of his humanitarian services to the poor and needy in Palestine during World War I. To portray these humanitarian services as calculated political acts is totally unjustified. Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá accepted the knighthood, he never used the title, and he never received any financial aid, much less "huge amounts of gold" (p.25 para 6), from the British government.

The intervention of the British government in 1918 to protect the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had nothing whatsoever to do with any supposed covert association between that government and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was inspired by, and in response to, urgent requests from the British Bahá'ís, who

were gravely concerned about the safety of the leader of their faith - just as Bahá'ís in the free world today appeal to their governments, expressing concern about the safety of their fellow-believers in Iran.

The concern of the British Bahá'ís arose from the fact that the leader of the advancing Turkish forces, Jamal Pasha (a fanatical and long-standing enemy of the Bahá'í Faith) had publicly declared his intention of crucifying 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his family on the slopes of Mount Carmel. The British authorities (including those named in the report, p.24 para 3) responded sympathetically to the appeals of the Bahá'ís and alerted the Commander of their forces in Palestine to the potential danger. Having entered Haifa, General Allenby duly cabled a confirmation to London that 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his family were safe.

In order to reinforce the argument that some clandestine connection existed between the British government and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the report (pages 24 to 26) cites the names of many prominent Britons. It should be emphasized, however, that, during his years in the Holy Land, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in contact with prominent personalities in many countries (among them such eminent figures as Dr. Auguste Forel of Switzerland, Leo Tolstoy of Russia, Professor Arminius Vambery of Hungary, Prince Muhammad-Ali Pasha of Egypt); with scholars and leaders in Lebanon and other middle-eastern countries; and with such institutions as the Central Organization for a Durable Peace, in the Netherlands.

Similarly, while the report (p.26 para 1) names the two British officials who attended 'Abdu'l-Bahá's funeral, it omits to mention that, in recognition of his high and unique position, the chiefs of the Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other religious communities in the Holy Land, as well as notables from all strata of Palestinian society, were also present at the obsequies.

4. *It is alleged that the Bahá'í Faith was used by the colonial powers as a tool for colonial expansion into Muslim countries.*

This is a complete fabrication, unsubstantiated even by the "evidence" adduced in its support. The report (p.26 para 5) accurately refers to a passage in the Bahá'í book "God Passes By", recording that the leader of the Bahá'í Faith was invited to "spend a while in India", but omits to cite either the circumstances of the invitation or the response to it - both of which are detailed in the same passage.

At the time of the invitation, news of the martyrdom of the Báb (the Prophet-Herald of the Bahá'í Faith) and the massacre of 20,000 of His followers had spread to the west and had aroused much sympathy and interest among Europeans. Bahá'u'lláh, the most prominent follower of the Báb (who had not yet declared His own mission) was exiled by the Iranian government and imprisoned in Baghdad. His plight attracted the sympathetic attention of the British consul-general in Baghdad, who offered Him the

protection of British citizenship and also offered to arrange residence for Him in India or in any other place agreeable to Him. Bahá'u'lláh declined these offers and chose instead to remain a prisoner in Baghdad.

It was not unusual at that time, nor is it unusual today, for government officials to offer aid and sanctuary to those they perceive as being the victims of oppression in other countries. This kind of intervention is commonly recognized as being humanitarian and non-political in nature. The attempt to portray the humanitarian assistance offered to Bahá'u'lláh as being part of a sinister project of colonial expansion is clearly ridiculous.

The reference (allegedly drawn from the same book, but actually to be found in a letter written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to an individual Bahá'í) to the "anxiety" of the government of France to send Bahá'ís to the French colonies in Muslim Africa is likewise taken out of context and is deliberately misleading. The true facts are that the French Ambassador in Teheran, greatly impressed by the Bahá'í teachings and by their effect upon the people who embraced them, suggested that Bahá'ís might go to Tunisia and teach their faith there. 'Abdu'l-Bahá duly mentioned this suggestion in a letter to one of his followers but, as it happened, nothing ever came of it. Clearly, this incident cannot seriously be used to suggest, or prove, any form of collusion between the Bahá'í Faith and the French government to promote colonial expansion in Africa.

5. *Certain Bahá'ís are alleged to have held high political office during the reign of the late Shah.*

Bahá'ís are forbidden by the laws of their faith from becoming involved in partisan politics or from holding any political post. The report (pp 27/28) accuses the Iranian Bahá'ís of not adhering to this principle of their faith, alleging that certain people identified as Bahá'ís held prominent political positions during the reign of the late Shah. These accusations are refuted below.

*It should be noted in this connection that, during the reign of the Shah, it was common for unscrupulous politicians to attempt to discredit their political opponents by accusing them of being Bahá'ís. Such accusations were either entirely without foundation or were based upon the fact that the fathers or families of the individuals concerned had once been Bahá'ís. It is, however, a basic principle of the Bahá'í 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. A person is a Bahá'í only when he freely declares himself to be a Bahá'í.*

It is true that Dr. Ayadi, a Bahá'í, served as personal physician to the late Shah. He was appointed to this *non-political* position not only because of his skill in medicine but also because of his personal integrity and trustworthiness. It is untrue to state (as does the report) that he was "the man behind the whole pharmaceutical market".

*General Khattani*, Commander of the Air Force, *Mrs. Parsa*, Minister of Education, and *General Nasiri*, Head of SAVAK, were never Bahá'ís and never claimed to be Bahá'ís.

*General Sani'i*, Minister of War, was once a Bahá'í but was expelled from the Bahá'í community when he accepted ministerial office in the government - in accordance with the Bahá'í law forbidding Bahá'ís to hold political office.

*Parviz Sabeti*, Director-General of SAVAK, *Mansur Ruhani*, Minister of Agriculture, and Prime Minister *Amir Abbas Hoveida* were never Bahá'ís and never claimed to be Bahá'ís. Their alleged membership in the Bahá'í community was based on the fact that their fathers were, or had once been, Bahá'ís.

6. *Bahá'ís are accused of being agents and political supporters of Zionism.*

*The report (p.27 para 1) cites the well-worn accusation that, since the Bahá'í World Centre is in Israel, the Bahá'í Faith must in some way be identified with Zionism, and also asserts that this means that the Bahá'í Faith is not a religion but is a "political entity created and nourished by anti-Islamic and Colonial Powers."*

The Bahá'í World Centre was established in the last century, long before the State of Israel came into existence, and has nothing to do with Zionism. The Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh, was exiled to the Holy Land in compliance with the order of two Islamic governments (Iran and Turkey). He remained in the Holy Land until His death in 1892, His Shrine was raised there, and the Holy Land thus became the world spiritual centre of the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'u'lláh Himself directed that the world spiritual and administrative centres of His faith must always be united in one locality. Accordingly, the world administrative centre of the Bahá'í Faith has always been and must continue to be in the Holy Land. It cannot be relocated for the sake of temporary political expediency.

References are made later in the report (p.28 paras 4 and 8) to the Bahá'ís sending "millions of dollars" to Israel to "support the Zionist regime". This allegation is entirely without foundation. The funds sent by Bahá'ís the world over (including those in Iran) to the Bahá'í World Centre are solely and exclusively for the upkeep of their holy Shrines and historic sites in the Holy Land, and for the administration of their faith.

It should be noted that other religious communities contribute towards the maintenance of their holy places in Israel without attracting the charge that they are financially supporting the government of Israel. Similarly, the Shiite Muslims send financial contributions towards the upkeep of their holy places at Najaf and Karbala in Iraq. Should the fact that Iran and Iraq are at war suddenly draw down the charge upon the Muslim Iranians that they have lent financial aid to the Iraqi government? Yet this is precisely the nature of the spurious allegation being made by the Iranian government against the Bahá'ís.

7. SAVAK documents adduced to support allegations against Bahá'ís.

*The report (pp.28/29) summarizes the contents of various documents allegedly extracted from the files of SAVAK, which purport to implicate Bahá'ís (or alleged Bahá'ís) in a variety of anti-Islamic activities.*

It is impossible for the Bahá'í International Community to comment upon these documents because it has not seen them. It might, however, be asked how and why - since the present Iranian government has itself discredited SAVAK - the documentation produced by this organization has suddenly become relevant and "authentic" where Bahá'ís are concerned?

The hostility of SAVAK towards the Bahá'ís is well attested. A SAVAK memorandum linking the bureau with the operations of the fanatical anti-Bahá'í organization Tablighat-i-Islami was published in the Iranian daily newspaper *Mujahid* on 9 June 1980, and one of the final acts of SAVAK in 1978, shortly before the fall of the Shah, was to attempt to divert public attention away from disaffection with the regime by mounting violent attacks on the Bahá'ís. During raids organized by SAVAK on Saadi village near Shiraz, 150 Bahá'í homes were looted and burned down. The Bahá'í International Community has in its possession an announcement by Ayatollah Mahallati, the most prominent religious leader in Shiraz, telling Muslims that such attacks against the Bahá'ís were the machinations of SAVAK, and warning them not to participate.

8. Specific cases of accused Bahá'ís.

*The report cites the cases of five Bahá'ís, tried in February 1980, who were "proven guilty in the Court of Justice" but whose sentences were commuted (p.31).*

These trials actually took place in Shiraz, under very questionable circumstances, and the Bahá'í International Community cannot comment upon the veracity of the evidence or charges. We do, however, have reliable and up-to-date information concerning the fate of these Bahá'ís.

1. Enayatollah Ehsanian - stated in the report to have been released for lack of evidence against him. True.
2. Ja'far Sha'er-zadeh - stated in the report to have been released on compassionate grounds. He was, in fact, re-arrested approximately one month ago and is currently in detention in Shiraz.
3. Sattar Khosh-Khu - stated in the report to have been found guilty of supporting Zionism and to have been given a two-year prison sentence. He was, in fact, summarily executed in Shiraz on 30 April 1981 (approximately 14 months after his trial).
4. Enayatollah Mehdi-zadeh - stated in the report to have been released. He was actually released after spending ten months in prison.

5. Mohammad-Reza Hesami - stated in the report to have been fined and released. He is, in fact, still in prison and has not at any time been released.

*The stated purpose of including these details in the report was to make it "crystal clear" that "not a single person in the Islamic Republic of Iran is tried and punished merely because of his/her particular ideology or set of principles." (p.30 para 7).*

Even if it were to be assumed, for the sake of argument, that the details of the cases cited in the report were true, it is difficult to see how isolated cases such as these could justify the pervasive and continuing persecution of the entire Bahá'í community of Iran.

*Despite the repeated denials of the Iranian government, it is clear that the persecution of the Bahá'ís is based solely upon their religious beliefs.*

During the past four years, one hundred and eighteen Bahá'ís have died for their faith in Iran. No evidence exists to support any of the charges brought against those who were executed. In the very few cases in which a Bahá'í has been willing to recant his faith, he has immediately been released and all charges against him dropped - while his fellow believers who refused to recant have been executed.

Two Bahá'ís very recently executed in Shiraz - Mr. Habibu'llah Awji on 16 November and Mr. Ziya'u'llah Ahrari on 21 November - were offered their freedom by the trial judge if they would agree to recant their religion. In the case of Mr. Ahrari, the court verdict - published in the Teheran daily newspaper Kayhan on 22 November - clearly stated that the principal charge against him was his membership in the Bahá'í community.

Membership in the Bahá'í community was first recognized by the courts as a capital offence in March 1981, when Mr. Mihdi Anvari and Mr. Hidayatu'llah Dihqani were tried and executed in Shiraz. In the case of Mr. 'Azizu'llah Gulshani, executed by hanging on 29 April 1982, the charges against him related solely to his Bahá'í activities. (These charges were detailed in Kayhan on 29 April 1982).

All the Bahá'ís executed during the past two years were prominent believers whose executions were intended to intimidate the rank and file of the Bahá'í community into recanting their faith. Most compelling is the fact that the authorities have twice eliminated the membership of the national governing body of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran. On 21 August 1980, all nine members of this body were arrested by revolutionary guards and have since disappeared without trace. On 27 December 1981, eight members of the national governing body that replaced them were secretly executed in Teheran. Their execution, initially denied by the authorities, was finally admitted by the President of the Supreme Court of Iran, Ayatollah Musavi Ardibili, at a press conference on 5 January 1982.

The executions and disappearances are part of a systematic campaign to eradicate the Iranian Bahá'í community and obliterate all traces of the Bahá'í Faith from Iran.

The other elements of the campaign are the confiscation and destruction of all Bahá'í community properties and holy places in Iran (now accomplished) and the denial of the most basic human rights to thousands upon thousands of innocent Bahá'ís. This denial has been expressed in many dehumanizing ways, such as dismissal from employment, denial of pensions, confiscation of private property and denial of schooling to children. (An article in the newspaper Kayhan on 25 November 1981 reported the expulsion of 43 students from the University of Shiraz because of their membership in the "misguided Bahá'í group").

Many of the notices dismissing Bahá'ís from their jobs have clearly stated that membership in the Bahá'í community is the reason for the dismissal, and many of the notices have stated that the individual concerned will be given back his job if he will publicly recant his faith. In a communiqué published in Kayhan on 8 December 1981, the Ministry of Labour stated that dismissal for life from government service had been decreed by the Islamic Parliament as "the punishment for anyone who is a member of the misguided Bahá'í group".

It is clear to the Bahá'í International Community that the allegations contained in the report circulated by Iran in the General Assembly represent an attempt to conceal, and to divert international attention from, the fanatically religious motivation of the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran, and to undermine the good reputation which the Bahá'í community enjoys throughout the world.

*The Bahá'í International Community emphatically refutes all the charges levelled against the Bahá'ís by the Iranian government and its spokesmen, most particularly the charges of political involvement and espionage, and strongly appeals for the establishment of an independent body to investigate the entire situation.*

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# BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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10 December 1982

Summary of  
STATEMENT IN REBUTTAL  
OF ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH BY THE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
General Assembly, 37th session, November 1982

In a document 1/ circulated to representatives to the Third Committee of the 37th session of the General Assembly on 23 November 1982, the Islamic Republic of Iran made a number of false and damaging statements concerning the nature of the Bahá'í Faith and the activities of its followers. The Bahá'í International Community has published a detailed refutation of these false statements 2/, of which the following are the main points.

The report alleges that the Bahá'í Faith is a political entity "created and nourished by anti-Islamic and colonial powers" and that the Bahá'í community has established "a very sophisticated and systematic espionage network".

The Bahá'í International Community categorically denies these allegations. The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion and its followers are forbidden, by the laws of their faith, from becoming involved in partisan politics or in any form of subversive activity.

The activities of Bahá'í communities in every part of the world are open to scrutiny and, in view of the serious nature of the charges made by the government of Iran, the Bahá'í International Community invites the establishment of an impartial body of inquiry to mount a thorough investigation into Bahá'í activities.

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1/ "Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran - a review of the facts", published by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations. Circulated in the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 23 November 1982.

2/ "Statement in Rebuttal of Accusations Made against the Bahá'í Faith by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations", published by the Bahá'í International Community, 30 November 1982.

All the allegations made against the Bahá'ís in Iran are based on deliberate misinterpretations of the aims and purposes of the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings. The most common charges are repeated in Iran's new report, which accuses Bahá'ís of:

- (a) being political supporters of the late Shah;
- (b) being a political organization opposed to the present Iranian government;
- (c) collaborating with SAVAK;
- (d) being enemies of Islam;
- (e) being agents of Zionism.

All these charges have been explained and refuted by the Bahá'í International Community in its publications 3/. The new charges contained in Iran's latest report can be answered as follows:

The report alleges that 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, was an agent of the British government in Palestine during World War I and that he was protected, financially rewarded and knighted by the British government in recognition of his services. The report quotes the names of several prominent Britons associated with 'Abdu'l-Bahá as evidence of his clandestine connections with the British.

The facts: 'Abdu'l-Bahá never received money from the British government and the knighthood conferred upon him was in recognition of his humanitarian services to the poor and needy in Palestine during World War I. The intervention of the British government to protect his life was inspired by and in response to appeals from the British Bahá'ís, who had learned that the Turkish commander, Jamal Pasha, had publicly vowed to crucify 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his family on Mount Carmel. During his years in the Holy Land, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in contact not only with prominent Britons but also with eminent personalities, scholars and leaders in many parts of Europe and the Middle East. His funeral was attended not only by the two British officials named in the report but also by the chiefs of the Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other religious communities in the Holy Land, and by notables from all strata of Palestinian society.

The report alleges that the Bahá'í Faith was used by the British and French governments as a tool for colonial expansion, and that invitations to Bahá'ís to "spend a while in India" and to teach their faith in North Africa provide proof of this.

The facts: Both these incidents are taken from Bahá'í books and quoted out of context. In the first, the British Consul-General in Baghdad offered humanitarian aid and residence in India to the persecuted and imprisoned Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'u'lláh declined these offers and chose to remain a prisoner in Baghdad. In the second case, 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentioned in a letter to one of his followers that the French ambassador in Teheran (who greatly admired the Bahá'í teachings) had suggested that Bahá'ís might go to Tunisia and teach their faith there. To suggest that either of these

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3/ "The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority", published by the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community, first published in June 1981, revised and updated July 1982.

incidents provides evidence of political collusion between the Bahá'í Faith and the colonial powers is clearly ridiculous.

The report alleges that, despite the laws of their faith forbidding involvement in partisan politics or the holding of any political post, certain Bahá'ís held high political office during the reign of the late Shah.

The facts: During the reign of the Shah, it was common for unscrupulous politicians to attempt to discredit their political opponents by accusing them of being Bahá'ís. Of the eight persons named in the report, six were never Bahá'ís and never claimed to be. The seventh had once been a Bahá'í but was expelled from the Bahá'í community when he accepted ministerial office in the government of the Shah. The eighth, who was indeed a Bahá'í, served in the non-political position of personal physician to the late Shah.

The report alleges that Bahá'ís are agents and political supporters of Zionism, and that the Bahá'í community financially supports the Israeli government.

The facts: The presence of the Bahá'í World Centre in Israel, and the absence of any connection between the Bahá'í Faith and Zionism, are fully explained in other documents, available for reference 4/. Funds sent by Bahá'ís the world over to the Bahá'í World Centre are used exclusively for the maintenance of their holy shrines and historic sites and for the administration of their faith, just as funds are sent by Christians and Muslims around the world for the upkeep of their holy places in the Holy Land.

The report alleges that various documents purportedly extracted from the files of SAVAK, and summarized in the report, prove the involvement of Bahá'ís in a variety of anti-Islamic activities.

It is impossible for the Bahá'í International Community to comment upon documents it has not seen. It might be asked, however, how and why--since the present Iranian government has itself discredited SAVAK--the documentation produced by this organization has suddenly become relevant and "authentic" where Bahá'ís are concerned? The hostility of SAVAK towards the Bahá'í community, and the collaboration between SAVAK and fanatical anti-Bahá'í organizations, are well documented. 5/

The report alleges that certain Bahá'ís charged with a variety of offences were given very lenient sentences or were released, and quotes names and details.

The facts: The summary trials referred to took place in Shiraz in February 1980. Of the four Bahá'ís reportedly released, two are still in prison, and the fifth--reportedly sentenced to two years in prison--was summarily executed in Shiraz on 30 April 1981.

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4/ E/CN.4/1517 - Note by the Secretary-General on the treatment of the Bahá'ís in Iran, 31 December 1981.

"The Bahá'ís in Iran: A Report on the Persecution of a Religious Minority" published by the United Nations Office of the Bahá'í International Community, first published in June 1981, revised and updated July 1982

5/ ibid.

The report alleges (and the cases quoted above are intended to support this allegation) that no Bahá'í has been prosecuted or punished simply because of his religion, and that any Bahá'í who has suffered death or imprisonment has been guilty of a criminal offence, duly proven in a court of law.

The facts: This argument does not explain the pervasive and continuing persecution of the entire Bahá'í community in Iran. It ignores the fact that no evidence has ever been adduced to support any of the charges brought against those Bahá'ís who were executed, and also ignores the fact that, in the very few cases in which a Bahá'í has been willing to recant his faith, he has immediately been released and all charges against him dropped - while his fellow believers who refused to recant have been executed. The argument does not explain the disappearance, following their arrest, of all nine members of the national governing body of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran, nor the secret execution in Teheran (initially denied by the authorities) of eight of their successors.

Furthermore, the argument that there is no large-scale persecution of the Bahá'í community on religious grounds is singularly unconvincing in the light of the fact that all Bahá'í community properties and holy places in Iran have been confiscated and/or destroyed, and that thousands of innocent Bahá'ís have been deprived of their fundamental human rights in a variety of dehumanizing ways, including dismissal from employment, denial of pensions, confiscation of private property and denial of education to children.

Details of the persecution of the Bahá'í community by the government of Iran, fully supported by documentary evidence from Iran, are on record and are available for reference. 6/

Despite the repeated denials of the Iranian government, it is clear that the persecution of the Bahá'ís is based solely upon their religious beliefs. It is equally clear that the allegations contained in the November 1982 report circulated by Iran represent an attempt to conceal, and to divert international attention from, the fanatically religious motivation of the persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran, and to undermine the good reputation which the Bahá'í community enjoys throughout the world.

The Bahá'í International Community emphatically refutes all the charges levelled against the Bahá'ís by the Iranian government and strongly appeals for the establishment of an independent body to investigate the entire situation.

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