



**Viewpoint** | Issues of the Day As Others See Them

# Iran's Outrageous Baha'i Persecution

*An organizer of members of the Baha'i Faith in Vacaville and Fairfield for more than 17 years, the author of today's Viewpoint reports on the atrocities reported in Iran. A native of the Fiji Islands, she converted to the faith in her early 30s. Now 65 and the mother of four daughters, she is a retired school teacher — Editor.*

By ZAINAB KHAN

The Baha'i Faith was born in Persia in 1844 by Baha'u'llah, Glory of God. He claims to be the messenger of God for today, the prince of peace and the promised of all ages. The Baha'i Faith is an independent worldwide religion that is represented in more than 100,000 localities in over 340 countries and territories.

A growing number of Baha'is meet regularly at my Vacaville home.

The Faith teaches the unity of mankind, unity of religions, equality of all races, equality of men and women, universal education, worldwide peace and harmony of science and religion.

The June 28 airing of "20/20," ABC's news magazine, exposed to millions of Americans a tragic spectacle of religious persecution and outright murder against a peaceful, law-abiding people in Iran—the Baha'is.

In turn for adherence to their beliefs, the Baha'is in Iran have been the victims of outrages the civilized world is at a loss to understand.

On June 18 the Islamic Republic of Iran hanged 10 women, three of them teenage girls. Their "crime" was a refusal to recant

their faith. The judge who condemned the women to death and recently sent seven Baha'i men to the gallows warned: "The Islamic nation will, God willing, fulfill the prayer mentioned in the Koran, 'Lord, leave not one single family of infidels on earth.'"

July 1 witnessed another outrage. Over 130 Baha'i men, women and children from the village of Ival were held captive for three days in a walled-in field without food or water.

After pressures to disavow their faith and accept Islam failed, they were allowed to return home. Later that same night, they were attacked by villagers and forced to hide in a nearby forest. Their fate remains unknown.

These violations represent but a tiny fraction of what Iran's largest religious minority has endured. Since the 1979 revolution in Iran, more than 150 Baha'is have been executed. Children have been kidnapped from their parents. Many homes have been confiscated, looted and destroyed. Pensions have been revoked.

Children have been expelled from school, sacred Baha'i properties and holy places have been destroyed, business and trade licenses have been refused, businesses have been shut down, vandalized and destroyed, and farmers have had their crops burned, and their animals killed or stolen, or decreed public property and sold at auctions.

This list could go on endlessly. They are promised reprieve if they will turn away from the Baha'i Faith and adopt Islamism. This they will not do.



Zainab Khan  
... leader of local faithful

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Rep. Fazio has also promised to see to it that oil imports from Iran are cut. He notes that we have alternative sources of oil of the same grade or better.

On May 22, President Reagan said, "the world is increasingly alarmed and dismayed at the persecution and severe repression of the Baha'is in Iran" and that they "are not guilty of any political offense or crime."

The Baha'i Faith teaches the need for world peace and tranquility. How long before they can realize this in Iran?

We invite everyone to join us every Tuesday at 8 p.m. for informal discussions and questions and answer sessions. We meet in Vacaville and we can give you more information simply by calling 448-0354.

The fate of the Baha'is in Iran has not gone unnoticed. The governments of Canada, Australia, Great Britain, West Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg and the Congress of the United States of America have issued protests. Also the United Nations Commission of Human Rights has also joined the cause.

We recently received some support from Rep. Vic Fazio, Solano County's representative in Congress.

He said, "I have recently agreed to co-sponsor a bill House Resolution 2778 which will show our serious commitment to this cause. The bill states that no article which is the growth or product of Iran may be imported into the U.S. until the president determines and satisfies the Congress that the government of Iran has ceased its persecu-

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