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Remembering An Unprotected Minority In Iran

June 30, 2007

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In light of the recent upsurge in violence in Iran, the new wave of persecution of minorities, the record high number of executions (at least 50 executions only in May 2007) including that of juvenile offenders, and the arbitrary arrests of academics, students, and peaceful human rights activists, ABF would like to draw attention to the Islamic Republic's fundamentally flawed legal system, which, over nearly three decades, has deprived Iranians of their basic rights including the right to due process of law and which considers some categories of citizens such as the Baha'is unfit to be protected by law.

Twenty-four years ago in June 1983, seventeen members of the Baha'i community in Iran were executed in the southern city of Shiraz*. These men and women were among scores of Baha'is arrested in Shiraz in 1982-1983, interrogated repeatedly, tortured and pressured to recant their faith.

The religious judge and head of the Shiraz Revolutionary Tribunal, who sentenced these men and women to death, publicly vilified Baha'is and described them as "deviant" and as "instruments of Satan". The judge referred to active members of the community as *kofar harbi*, or infidels, who have no rights, not even the right to life. "It is clear", he said, "that there is no room, whatsoever, for Baha'ism and Baha'is in the Islamic Republic of Iran".

Today, Baha'ism remains unrecognized in Iran, the Baha'i community has no legal status, and discrimination against it continues unchecked. Further, recent reports** indicate a new surge in anti-Baha'i propaganda and in the persecution of Baha'is dwelling in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

By remembering and honoring the memory of these seventeen victims, whose execution was a blatant violation of their right to freedom of religion, and, in the light of the alarming news from Iran, ABF hopes to draw attention to the vulnerability of the members of an unrecognized community whose blood can be shed legally in their own country.

* [Bahram Afnan](#) , [Inayatu'llah Ishraqi](#) , [Kurush Haqbin](#), [Nusrat](#)

iranrights.org/english/newsletter-5.php

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The information in these victims' stories is not complete. ABF hopes that by presenting what is available at this time, survivors and those who knew the victims will be encouraged to come forth and submit facts and documents relevant to their cases and to the case of other Baha'is put to death in Iran.

(<http://www.abfiran.org/memorial-add.php>)

** Background on the recent persecution of Baha'is:

<http://www.bahai.org/persecution/iran/update>

Iran Steps Up Monitoring of Baha'is:

<http://www.abfiran.org/english/document-269-611.php>

Baha'i Schoolchildren in Iran Increasingly Harassed and Abused by School Authorities:

<http://www.abfiran.org/english/document-281-656.php>

A Faith Denied:

http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/pdfs/Reports/bahai_fullreport.pdf

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