

Bahá'í International Community

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COVER PAGE

Individual UPR contribution

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Islamic Republic of Iran: Universal Periodic Review, third cycle Contribution concerning human rights violations against the Bahá'ís

1. Four years on from the last UPR cycle, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not taken any measures to implement the recommendations that it accepted concerning members of the Bahá'í religious community. The opposite is true, in fact, during the years after Iran's UPR in 2014, human rights violations against the Bahá'ís has continued to intensify throughout the country. A wide range of civil, political, economic, social, educational, and cultural rights have been systematically abused, as detailed below.

2. In this contribution to the third cycle of the UPR, we will address the recommendations noted by Iran at its second review that unquestionably apply to Iranian Bahá'ís. These recommendations were made by 19 different states (Appendix 1) and have been grouped into the following topics:

- Unlawful arrests, arbitrary detentions, home raids, and violations of due process
- Economic persecution
- Denial of the right to education
- Denial of the right to practice one's belief, including cultural rights, desecration and destruction of Bahá'í cemeteries, and violation of burial rights
- Incitement to hatred

3. A list of other recommendations specifically mentioning the Bahá'ís that were not supported by the Iranian government can be found in Appendix 2.

Unlawful arrests, arbitrary detentions, home raids, violations of due process

4. The following recommendations from the second cycle UPR on Iran, fully or partially supported by the government, have not been implemented as they apply to Bahá'ís:

- *138.25 Strengthen its national legislation in accordance with the international treaties that it has ratified. (Burkina Faso)*
- *138.28 Make all efforts to guarantee and to protect the rights and freedoms enshrined in the international instruments the country is a party to. (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)*
- *138.185 Ensure decent conditions of detention. (France)*
- *138.211 Ensure, in law and in practice, that all citizens are given fair trials based on the rule of law, as accepted in the 2010 UPR examination. (Norway)*
- *138.226 Guarantee the right to legitimate freedom of expression, association and assembly, and release political prisoners, including activists, lawyers and journalists, detained solely for exercising these rights. (Australia)*

5. Bahá'ís are not free to practice their religion without harassment. Arbitrary detentions and interrogations are continually carried out against adherents of the Bahá'í Faith, and the charges they are accused of reflect the absence of freedom of religion or belief for Bahá'ís in Iran.

6. Recommendations #138.25 and #138.28 call for application of international treaties, to which Iran is a party. Iran ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1975, yet

Iranian Bahá'ís continue to be arrested, summoned, and interrogated by government officials solely for their religious beliefs. Such discrimination is in clear violation of Article 2 of the ICCPR concerning protection without discrimination; Article 18 concerning freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; and Article 27 concerning religious minorities.

7. Recommendation #138.226 calls for the release of those detained solely for exercising the right to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, and to ensure that their rights are guaranteed. Unfortunately, members of the Bahá'í community have been arrested in different localities throughout the country and have suffered ill-treatment at the hands of government officials. In nearly all cases, their homes and/or workplaces are searched and items, such as personal belongings, particularly books, photographs, computers, copying machines, and other supplies, as well as items related to the Bahá'í Faith, are confiscated. Many have been kept in solitary confinement for long periods and are often detained for weeks or months before being released on bail. The bail demands are exorbitantly high, requiring families to hand over deeds to their properties or business licenses.

8. Recommendations #138.185 and #138.211 call for fair trials and decent conditions of detention. However, Bahá'ís are mistreated throughout the judicial processes. The violations of a due judicial process are reflected in the nature of the charges levelled against them throughout Iran and they face disproportionately high sentences for the “crime” of simply exerting their freedom of religion.

9. In September 2016 Mr. Farhang Amiri, a Bahá'í from Yazd, was murdered outside his house. The perpetrators, two men, admitted that they were prompted to carry out this heinous act owing to statements made by clerics against Bahá'ís. The two men were sentenced to merely 11 and 5 years' imprisonment, because, according to the court, the accused and the victim were not equal for the general purpose of retributive justice, which only makes mention of *diya* and *qisas* for Muslims and adherents of the three constitutionally-recognized religious minorities (excluding Bahá'ís).¹ It thus legally deprives Bahá'ís of the right to seek justice, and, by implication, encourages violence against them with impunity. This case demonstrates the inherent discrimination and injustice at the heart of the Iranian Penal Code for victims of crime who happen to be Bahá'í.

10. Since August 2005, more than **1,234** Bahá'ís have been arrested in Iran solely because of their religious beliefs. Moreover, during the last 13 years, intelligence officers have summoned more than **463** Bahá'ís for interrogation without conducting official arrests. Sadly, the situation has not improved since the election of President Hassan Rouhani in August 2013. Since he came to power, we have documented at least **502** arrests of Bahá'ís. Some specific cases regarding unlawful arrests, arbitrary detentions, home raids, and violations of due process can be found in Appendix 3.

Economic persecution

11. The following recommendation from the second cycle UPR on Iran, fully supported by the government, has not been implemented as they apply to Bahá'ís:

- *138.88 Continue its national policy to promote equal opportunities and treatment with respect to employment. (Sri Lanka)*

12. Recommendation #138.88, which was supported by the Iranian government, has regretfully not been implemented since the last review. Following the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government commenced a systematic campaign to deny Bahá'ís the right to work and employment. Bahá'ís face constant harassment in their professions and workplaces and have been barred from employment in the public sector. For the last several

¹ *Diya*: “Blood money”; *Qisas*: “Retributive justice”.

years, Iran has utilized a strategy of systematically sealing Bahá'í-owned businesses deemed to have acted illegally simply for temporarily closing to observe a Bahá'í holy day. Additionally, in some cases Bahá'ís have been denied access to their own rightfully earned pensions. The persecution also extends to non-Bahá'ís, who are threatened if they employ Bahá'ís as workers.

13. Since President Rouhani came to power in 2013, there have been at least **803** documented incidents of economic persecution or discrimination against Iranian Bahá'ís. This represents a minimum number, given the difficulty of obtaining accurate information about human rights violations in Iran. Incidents include arbitrary shop closures, unjust dismissals, the actual or threatened revocation of business licenses, and other actions to suppress the economic activity of Bahá'ís. Some specific cases of systematic economic persecution can be found in Appendix 4.

14. Official documents prove that these abuses are not isolated cases but are, in fact, a matter of established government policy. In particular, a letter from Tehran's *Amaken*², dated 9 April 2007 confirms orders to the commanders of police and heads of intelligence and security throughout its province that members of the “perverse Bahaist sect” must be prevented from engaging in certain occupations. The letter stipulates that Bahá'ís must be denied work permits and licenses for over 25 kinds of specifically-listed businesses and are barred from any other “high-earning businesses” (Appendix 5).

Denial of the right to education

15. The following recommendations from the second cycle UPR on Iran, fully or partially supported by the government, have not been implemented as they apply to Bahá'ís:

- *138.111 Adopt provisions to prevent all forms of discrimination against women and girls and, in particular, promote access to higher education for members of the Bahá'í community and other religious minorities. (Chile)*
- *138.271 Intensify and carry forward its efforts, particularly in the area of right to education. (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)*

16. Although recommendations #138.111 and #138.271 were partially and fully supported by Iran, it is an official policy of the government to expel individuals from universities and vocational training institutions as soon as they are identified as Bahá'ís. The 1991 government memorandum concerning “The Bahá'í Question”, produced by Iran's Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council, specifically called for Iran's Bahá'ís to be treated such “that their progress and development shall be blocked.” The document indicated, for example, that the government aims to keep the Bahá'ís illiterate and uneducated, living only at a subsistence level. The section that defined the “educational and cultural status” of adherents to the Bahá'í Faith includes the instruction that “[t]hey must be expelled from universities, either in the admissions process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Bahá'ís.” Some specific cases of Bahá'ís being denied the right to education can be found in Appendix 6.

² *Amaken* (Public Places Supervision Office): Is reportedly responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in places of work and other offices.

Denial of the right to practice one's belief, including cultural rights, desecration and destruction of Bahá'í cemeteries, and violation of burial rights

17. The following recommendations from the second cycle UPR on Iran, fully or partially supported by the government, have not been implemented as they apply to Bahá'ís:

- *138.90 Reform laws that contain discriminatory provisions. (Bosnia and Herzegovina)*
- *138.118 Guarantee the full enjoyment by all minorities of all their social, cultural and political rights, especially their right to education. (Bahrain)*
- *138.119 Adopt policies and mechanisms to avoid that members of any religious minority suffer from any kind of discrimination or human rights violation for exerting their right to worship according to their faith. (Brazil)*
- *138.131 Review its legislation and policy so as to ensure freedom of religion of persons belonging to religious minorities, including Bahá'ís, as well as protection of their other human rights without any discrimination. (Czech Republic)*
- *138.219 Take measures to fully respect the freedom of religion and belief of its citizens. (Norway)*
- *138.220 Ensure respect, in law and in practice, of the freedom of religion and belief. (Poland)*
- *138.221 Ensure the freedom of religion and belief for all citizens of Iran. (Romania)*

18. These recommendations invited the government of Iran to ensure that all of its citizens, regardless of religious beliefs, would be free from discrimination, and asked the Iranian government to pay particular attention to the rights of religious minorities. It is lamentable that despite these recommendations, Iran has both failed to ensure the protection of all of its citizens in regard to religious freedom, but also continues to harass Bahá'ís based purely on their faith.

19. Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution stipulates that Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized minorities who are free “within the limits of the law” to perform their religious rites and ceremonies and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education. Since religious practices are effectively limited to these three religions, other religious minorities are essentially stripped of the freedom to practice their faith. This includes restrictions imposed on the freedom of expression, association, and assembly under the Iranian Constitution.

20. Under Article 14 of the Iranian Constitution, “the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are duty-bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms and the principles of Islamic justice and equity and to respect their human rights. This principle applies to all who refrain from engaging in conspiracy or activity against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.” This conditionality in Article 14 justifies persecution of non-Muslims who are judged to be engaged in conspiracy or activity against Islam, and as belief in the Bahá'í Faith is considered heresy, any involvement in the Faith is then considered as “engaging in conspiracy or activity against Islam.” The Iranian government has used the vague conditionality of Article 14 to bring conspiracy charges against members of the Bahá'í Faith.

21. One of the ways that the authorities have continued their systematic discrimination is by instituting policies that affect various aspects of Bahá'í belief and practice. This includes, but is not limited to the Bahá'í community's holy places, cemeteries, and properties being confiscated, vandalized, or destroyed, and Bahá'ís being denied the right to observe burial practices.

22. The desecration and destruction of Bahá'í cemeteries began methodically during post-revolutionary Iran as a means to strip the Bahá'ís of their cultural identity and to erase any ties to the community as a whole. Although, in some cities, Bahá'ís have been given access to land for a modest cemetery, such initiatives on the part of the authorities are not acts of compassion, rather, it is a reflection of their deep-seated prejudice towards the Bahá'ís. Most alarming are their rationales that Bahá'ís should not be buried in Muslim cemeteries because they are considered *najis*, and they are not “people of the Book (Qur'an)”.³ When Bahá'ís are provided property to use as a cemetery, oftentimes officials fail to respect the rights of the deceased Bahá'ís to be buried according to Bahá'í laws.⁴ For example, many deceased Bahá'ís from Tabriz and Sanandaj are required to be buried in the Miandoab and Ghorveh Cemeteries respectively, which are at least 160 and 90 kilometres away, and take well over an hour to get to. In several cases, where the authorities have taken over the burial process, the families concerned were only informed after the burials had already taken place. Moreover, there have been at least **78** attacks against Bahá'í cemeteries in different localities throughout Iran since August 2005. Vandals have attacked Bahá'í cemeteries with total impunity, destroying graves and causing extensive damage. Some specific cases can be found in Appendix 7.

Incitement to hatred

23. The following recommendations from the second cycle UPR on Iran, fully or partially supported by the government, have not been implemented as they apply to Bahá'ís:

- *138.50 Continue its policies and initiatives aimed at the promotion of dialogue, cooperation and tolerance between different cultures and religions of the national minorities of Iran. (Armenia)*
- *138.53 Strengthen and expand interreligious and intercultural dialogue. (Lebanon)*
- *138.89 Adopt a general law against discrimination. (Benin)*
- *138.117 Take all necessary measures to protect ethnic and religious minorities from all forms of discrimination. (Bahrain)*
- *138.127 Take all appropriate measures to end discrimination and intimidation against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities. (Slovakia)*

24. These recommendations call on the Iranian government to cease engaging in a systematic campaign of discrimination, especially against the Bahá'ís. However, not only has the

³ For example, in April 2017, the Bahá'ís in Tabriz visited the director of the *Vadiy-i-Rahmat* (“Valley of Mercy”, referring to a cemetery) in Tabriz to ask about the refusal to bury Bahá'ís in the cemetery. The Bahá'ís were told that instructions had been issued by higher authorities, and were advised to wait patiently for a response to a complaint filed earlier. A member of the Islamic Council in Tabriz wrote to the Mayor of Tabriz requesting him to make it possible for the Bahá'ís to bury their deceased in the city. However, in response, the authorities, determining the Bahá'ís to be *najis* (“unclean”) based on the fatwa of the religious jurists, stated that the people were opposed to the burial of the Bahá'ís in the public cemetery.

⁴ Bahá'í teachings require that the bodily remains of a deceased be buried in a location that is less than an hour's journey from the city in which he or she died.

government failed to implement these recommendations, there has been an upsurge in human rights violations against the Bahá'ís that has been preceded and accompanied by efforts to incite hatred, distrust, intolerance, and even violence against them. Some officials have openly encouraged the persecution, and some members of the clergy have preached sermons against the Bahá'í Faith and its adherents. National and provincial budgets have included allocations for “educational” programmes to “confront” the Bahá'í Faith, and official organs have been established and dedicated to that purpose. This is institutionalised incitement to hatred.

25. The materials present a wide range of completely false allegations. Members of the Bahá'í community across Iran receive threatening telephone calls, text messages, and anonymous letters, and they encounter anti-Bahá'í pamphlets in shops, schools, and other public places. In many localities, graffiti is spray-painted in and on Bahá'í cemeteries, houses, shops, orchards, and vehicles. Without fail, these secondary sources of slander contain the very same malicious lies and incendiary language found in media affiliated with, and controlled and sanctioned by, the government.

26. Since January 2014, there have been more than **36,002** articles, videos, or web pages appearing in government-controlled or government-sponsored media featuring anti-Bahá'í propaganda. In all cases, the dissemination was sponsored and/or approved by the State. Since August 2016, hundreds of influential figures, including clerics, religious figures, academics, editors, and government representatives have publicly issued speeches, articles, or written declarations against the Bahá'ís. Such statements have been published on websites of various media organizations affiliated with the Iranian government that regularly attack the Bahá'ís. Some specific cases regarding the systematic incitement to hatred can be found in Appendix 8.

Conclusion

27. This document demonstrates that, to date, the Iranian government has taken no measures of any kind to implement the UPR recommendations that it accepted pertaining to the Bahá'ís. On the contrary, during the past four years, the situation of the Bahá'ís has steadily deteriorated, and the violations against them are now much more intense and severe than in 2014. International monitoring constitutes the only safeguard and the key factor in the protection of this community. Only when legal and administrative steps are taken to completely emancipate the Bahá'ís, will Iran be able to claim full compliance with its repeated declarations of its commitment to human rights.

Appendix 1

List of recommendations from the second cycle UPR on Iran, which are fully or partially supported by the government, but have not been implemented as they apply to Bahá'ís:

Recommendation from Second UPR on Iran	Country	Level of support	Implementation
138.25 Strengthen its national legislation in accordance with the international treaties that it has ratified.	Burkina Faso	Supported	Not implemented
138.28 Make all efforts to guarantee and to protect the rights and freedoms enshrined in the international instruments the country is a party to.	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Supported	Not implemented
138.50 Continue its policies and initiatives aimed at the promotion of dialogue, cooperation and tolerance between different cultures and religions of the national minorities of Iran.	Armenia	Supported	Not implemented
138.53 Strengthen and expand interreligious and intercultural dialogue.	Lebanon	Supported	Not implemented
138.88 Continue its national policy to promote equal opportunities and treatment with respect to employment.	Sri Lanka	Supported	Not implemented
138.89 Adopt a general law against discrimination.	Benin	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.90 Reform laws that contain discriminatory provisions.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.110 Continue to take measures to strengthen mechanisms for the protection of the rights of women and children.	Uzbekistan	Supported	Not implemented
138.111 Adopt provisions to prevent all forms of discrimination against women and girls and, in particular, promote access to higher education for members of the Bahá'í community and other religious minorities.	Chile	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.117 Take all necessary measures to protect ethnic and religious minorities from all forms of discrimination.	Bahrain	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.118 Guarantee the full enjoyment by all minorities of all their social, cultural and	Bahrain	Partially supported	Not implemented

political rights, especially their right to education.			
138.119 Adopt policies and mechanisms to avoid that members of any religious minority suffer from any kind of discrimination or human rights violation for exerting their right to worship according to their faith.	Brazil	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.127 Take all appropriate measures to end discrimination and intimidation against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities.	Slovakia	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.131 Review its legislation and policy so as to ensure freedom of religion of persons belonging to religious minorities, including Bahá'ís, as well as protection of their other human rights without any discrimination.	Czech Republic	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.185 Ensure decent conditions of detention.	France	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.211 Ensure, in law and in practice, that all citizens are given fair trials based on the rule of law, as accepted in the 2010 UPR examination.	Norway	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.219 Take measures to fully respect the freedom of religion and belief of its citizens.	Norway	Supported	Not implemented
138.220 Ensure respect, in law and in practice, of the freedom of religion and belief.	Poland	Supported	Not implemented
138.221 Ensure the freedom of religion and belief for all citizens of Iran.	Romania	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.226 Guarantee the right to legitimate freedom of expression, association and assembly, and release political prisoners, including activists, lawyers and journalists, detained solely for exercising these rights.	Australia	Partially supported	Not implemented
138.271 Intensify and carry forward its efforts, particularly in the area of right to education.	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Supported	Not implemented

Appendix 2

List of recommendations from the second cycle UPR on Iran, specifically regarding the situation of Bahá'ís, which were not supported by the Iranian government.

Recommendation from Second UPR on Iran	Country	Level of support
138.125 Put an end to acts of repression against ethnic and religious minorities, in particular Bahá'ís, and take effective measures to put an end to discriminatory policies against them.	Luxembourg	Not supported
138.126 Eliminate reported discrimination against religious minorities such as the Bahá'ís and offer better legal protection to such communities.	Sierra Leone	Not supported
138.128 Take measures to ensure non-discrimination in law and in practice against ethnic and religious minorities, including arbitrary detention and exclusion from higher education and government employment, as well as governmental interference in private employment against persons belonging to the Bahá'ís community.	Sweden	Not supported
138.129 Cease all discrimination against members of religious and ethnic minorities, including Bahá'ís, Dervishes, Christians, Ahwazi Arabs, Balochs and Kurds, and ensure respect for freedom of religion.	Australia	Not supported
138.130 End discrimination in law and in practice against all religious and ethnic minorities, such as Bahá'ís, Sufis, Kurds and Sunni Arabs, and ensure full protection of their rights.	Austria	Not supported
138.132 Put an end to discrimination and repression against people because of their ethnic and religious affiliation, including Bahá'ís, Kurds, Ahwazis and Christians.	France	Not supported
138.133 End discrimination in law and in practice against religious and ethnic minorities, including the Bahá'í community.	Lithuania	Not supported
138.134 Take steps to prevent discrimination and incitement to hatred against the Bahá'í or any other ethnic or religious minority, regardless of whether it is officially recognized.	Mexico	Not supported

Appendix 3

The following are some examples of arrests, arbitrary detentions, and home raids that have occurred since July 2018.

- On 7 August 2018, Mr. Mehran Bandi-Amirabad was arrested by the authorities, without a written summons, to serve his 1 year and 6 months' prison sentence and 1 year exile to Divandarreh, which was handed down by Branch 3 of the Appeals Court in Yazd in July. Also, on 8 August, Mr. Mehran Eslami-Amirabadi was summoned to serve his 1 year and 6 months' prison sentence and 1 year exile to Saravan by the same Court, and he surrendered himself to the prison. It was then learned in January 2019 that Mr. Bandi-Amirabadi and Mr. Eslami-Amirabadi had their sentences reduced to 6 months' imprisonment under *tazir* law. Their case was sent to the Supreme Court for review, which subsequently submitted their appeal to Branch 11 of the Court, as the parallel court. This was done because of a judicial delay and given that their previous charges date back to May/June 2012, pursuant to Article 137 of the Islamic Penal Code.
- On 17 August 2018, 30 armed government agents raided the house of a Bahá'í during a gathering in Fars Province. Six individuals were arrested and their homes were searched, with the usual items being confiscated.
- On 16 September 2018, concurrent with the recent arrests in Shiraz, the authorities raided a class on environmental preservation in Tehran Province. After confiscating the items belonging to those present and thoroughly searching the house, the authorities arrested four individuals. All of those arrested were transferred to Evin Prison.
- On 23 September 2018, eight Bahá'ís from Baharestan, Saham Armin, Afshin Bolbolan, Milad Davardan, Anoush Rayeneh, Foujan Rashidi, Sepideh Rowhani, Farhang Sahba, and Bahareh Zayni (Sobhanian) were arrested by Intelligence agents. Each of their houses were searched and the usual items were confiscated. Following their arrest, they were placed in solitary confinement until 10 October 2018, after which the men were transferred to Dastgerd Prison while the women were sent to Dolatabad Prison. On 18 November 2018, Mrs. Sepideh Rowhani was again arrested after a raid at her home by agents of the Intelligence Office in Tehran, who confiscated the usual items. It was learned in January 2019 that the sentences of these individuals were upheld without change by the Court of Appeal.
- On 24 September 2018, two individuals were arrested. One was later released on bail. During detention, one was subjected to torture and abuse in an attempt to coerce an admission from him, which he did not provide.
- On 1 October 2018, Mrs. May Kholousi, and her daughter, Ms. Saghi Fadaie, who had been sentenced to one year of imprisonment under *tazir* law, were summoned and reported themselves to Mashhad Prison. By way of background, in March 2018, Mrs. Kholousi and Ms. Fadaie, along with two other Bahá'ís, were found guilty of “propaganda against the regime” by Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court.
- It was learned in October 2018 that the five individuals—Ms. Farzaneh Amini, Mr. Peyman Ghiami, Mrs. Soheila Mollaei, Ms. Sinou Rasouli, and Mr. Borhan Tebyanian—

who were all arrested last year, were called back to Branch 7 of the Court of Kermanshah for further questioning and for “amendment of charges”. The wording of the charges against these individuals were changed to no longer include the phrases “Bahá’í sect” and “perverse sect” but were reworded to “membership in groups against the regime” and “intent to disturb state security”.

- On 16 October 2018, security agents raided the home of Mr. Parvan Manavi and Mrs. Elham Salmanzadeh, residents of Andisheh, Karaj. After searching the house and confiscating the usual items, they were both arrested. On 16 December 2018, they were released on 300 million tuman bail (approximately US\$70,471) from Evin Prison.
- On 31 October 2018, Mr. Zabihollah Raoufi, who was sentenced by Branch 4 of the Appeals Court in Kurdistan to one year of imprisonment under *tazir* law and one year of exile to Minab, reported himself to Sanandaj Prison to start his sentence after his appeal failed.
- It was reported in November 2018 that in Yazd, Mr. Naser Bagheri and his son, Mr. Faez Bagheri, who had been arrested on 28 February 2015 and subsequently released on bail, were sentenced to 3 years, and 9 months imprisonment, respectively.
- It was learned in November 2018 that Mrs. Mitra Badrnezhad and Mr. Farajollah Bangaleh were sentenced to 5 years’ imprisonment each under *tazir* law by Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court of Ahvaz. Mr. Bangaleh had been arrested on 28 March 2018, and Mrs. Badrnezhad on 3 March 2018, both of whom, at the time, had been released on bail.
- On 3 November 2018, two groups of seven Intelligence agents raided two locations in Gilavand, where Bahá’ís had gathered; the homes of Mr. Hosein Mazloumi and Mr. Ali Aghdasi. The authorities confiscated all mobile telephones and laptop computers, and searched the entire house. In the home of Mr. Mazloumi, they found about 2.5 million tuman (approximately US\$596) in cash, and in the home of Mr. Aghdasi, approximately one billion tuman worth (approximately US\$238,457) of coins and other currencies, which they initially confiscated but eventually returned. The Bahá’ís were questioned about the reason for their gathering and who had invited them. Each were then given a piece of paper to provide an undertaking that they would not participate in such gatherings anymore. The authorities then asked everyone to leave.

Subsequently, Mr. Ali Aghdasi, Ms. Monireh Bavali, Ms. Minou Fanaian, Mr. Sohrab Fanaian, and Mr. Hosein Mazloumi, across the two locations, were arrested. The authorities also went to the homes of Mr. Sohrab Fanaian, Ms. Minou Fanaian, and Ms. Monireh Bavali and conducted thorough searches. The arrestees remained in the Intelligence Office in Damavand until 4:00 a.m. the following day. They were then transported to Evin Prison, where they stayed for two or three hours and were finally returned to Damavand. In Damavand, the Bahá’ís were asked about the Bahá’í Cemetery of Gilavand. Ultimately, in the evening of the same day, they were again taken back to Evin Prison, where they were released without bail and all of their belongings were returned to them.

- On 17 and 18 November 2018, Intelligence agents raided five Bahá’í homes in Tabriz, and after a search of the homes and removal of the usual items, they arrested Mr. Farzad

Bahadori, Mr. Shahriar Khodapanah, and Mr. Kambiz Mishaghi on 17 November 2018, and Mrs. Monica Alizadeh (Aghdasi) and Mr. Khayrollah Bakhshi on 18 November 2018. Also on 18 November, agents of the Intelligence Office in Tabriz searched the home of Ms. Shabnam Isakhani. Since she was not at home, they summoned her the next day to the Intelligence Office for questioning. On 20 November 2018, Ms. Isakhani was arrested after appearing at the Intelligence Office. By way of background, Mr. Bahadori and Ms. Isakhani were also arrested in May 2015, along with Mr. Bahadori's wife, two daughters, and another individual. They were all sentenced to 1 year of imprisonment under *tazir* law but later, in a rare move by the judiciary, acquitted on appeal. In addition, Mr. Khodapanah and Mr. Mishaghi were among the 16 Bahá'í individuals who had their businesses sealed in December 2017 in Tabriz. On 16 December 2018, they were released on 250 million tuman bail (approximately US\$59,341) from Tabriz Prison.

- On 18 November 2018, at 8:00 in the morning, agents of the Intelligence Office in Tehran arrested Mrs. Shahrzad Nazifi (Naraghi) outside her home, and then searched her house and took the usual items. Ms. Nazifi was released on bail from Evin Prison on 3 December 2018.
- On 20 November 2018, seven Intelligence agents in Ghaemshahr raided the home of Mr. Ali Ahmadi. After searching the house and confiscating Mr. Ahmadi's personal belongings, they arrested him on charges of propaganda against the regime and transferred him to the Kachouie detention facilities in Sari. By way of background, on 19 May 2008, Mr. Ahmadi was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment and 1 year exile, which he served. Months after his release from prison, on 14 November 2009, his home was raided and the usual items confiscated. His home was again raided by Ministry of Intelligence agents on 30 October 2011. He was subsequently arrested on 16 November 2011 and released on bail of 40 million tumans (US\$35,000 in 2011) after being arbitrarily detained for 27 days. On 16 April 2012, Mr. Ahmadi was sentenced by Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court of Sari to 1 year's imprisonment under *tazir* law on the charge of "propaganda against the regime by way of propaganda for the perverse Bahaist sect", which was later changed to a fine.
- Mrs. Yekta Fahandej had been arrested in March 2014 and, after 56 days in custody, was sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment under *tazir* law. Her sentence was subsequently reduced by the Court of Appeals to 2 years of imprisonment and 3 years of suspended sentence. After the decision was overturned by the Supreme Court, the file was submitted to Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz, which recently sentenced Mrs. Fahandej to 11 years of imprisonment under *tazir* law. The long running background to this case is that Mrs. Fahandej was among those individuals previously arrested on 3 February 2012 in Shiraz and charged with teaching the Bahá'í Faith. She was released on 24 April 2012, after posting bail. Mrs. Fahandej was charged with "holding a gathering with the intention of disturbing the security of the country", "propaganda against the regime" and "aggressive behavior towards the agents". She was given a suspended sentence of 3 years' imprisonment and then acquitted in the Court of Appeals.

On 18 March 2014, Ministry of Intelligence agents raided Mrs. Fahandej's house with a warrant and arrested her. Six individuals were present at the time of the raid—two women, including Mrs. Fahandej, and four men— all of whom were videotaped, with the men being asked to state their religion. A little after midnight, Mrs. Fahandej was transferred to the Ministry of Intelligence's detention centre, along with her confiscated

properties including Bahá'í books, photographs and her computer. Mrs. Fahandej was incarcerated for a period of two months before being released on bail.

Then, it was learned in July 2016 that Ms. Fahandej was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment under tazir law. She had lodged an appeal and her file was sent to the Court of Appeals for review. On 16 July 2016 Ms. Fahandej was again arrested in Shiraz and imprisoned.

- On 26 December 2018, Mrs. Ahmadzadeh (first name unknown), resident of Ghaemshahr, Mazandaran province was arrested by the authorities. She was released from prison on a 50 million tuman bail (approximately US\$11,886) after one week.
- On 9 January 2019, Mr. Moin Mohammadi, resident of Yazd, was arrested by the authorities and his home was searched. He is charged with engaging in environmental activities.
- On 19 January 2019, Ms. Kimia Mostafavi (Imani) and Ms. Kiana Rezvani from Kerman were arrested by the authorities and their homes were searched. They were subsequently released on bail from Kerman Prison on 24 January 2019.
- On 20 January 2019, Mrs. Atousa Ahmadaie (Khorrami), resident of Tehran, was arrested by the authorities and her home was searched.

Appendix 4

The following are some examples of economic persecution that have occurred since July 2018.

- A trend has been recently observed involving the rejection of bank loan applications from young married Bahá'í couples. The couples have applied for loans at several banks and are repeatedly rejected because the documentation they used to prove their marriage was not accepted. For context, standard marriage certificates are not granted to Bahá'ís, who must use a unique form of marriage documentation registered through Notary Public Offices. Most banks recognise the validity of this documentation, however, such documentation helps banks identify Bahá'ís, which can lead to discriminatory practices.
- As of July 2018, the Bahá'ís in Sari, Mazandaran, 29 of whose businesses were forcibly sealed in November 2016, continued to make representations to the authorities to request that their shops be unsealed. In some instances, authorities have indicated general support yet stated that it was not their decision to seal the shops. In another instance, the Public Prosecutor of Mazandaran Province told the Bahá'ís that they need only sign an undertaking so that their shops could be unsealed. By way of background, these shop closures were part of the over 90 Bahá'í owned businesses which were closed in Mazandaran alone in November 2016.
- On 27 September 2018, 30 September 2018, and 6 October 2018, respectively, the warehouses of a distributor of sanitary products with an inventory valued at 250 million tuman (approximately US\$59,604); a distributor of hospital gears and products with an inventory valued at 450 million tuman (approximately US\$107,216); and that of a distributor of sanitary products and cosmetics, were sealed on the allegations of “hoarding commodities”.
- It was recently learned in October 2018 that a Bahá'í in Alborz Province, who was arrested after his business was raided and sealed, has taken various legal steps to recover his inventory. His lawyer has explained to him that the judge in his case had said that if the Bahá'í professes himself as Muslim to the Intelligence agency then his business would be unsealed, his inventory would be returned to him, and he would face no further penalties.
- It was reported in November 2018 that a young Bahá'í, living in Hamadan Province, has repeatedly been faced with the challenge in which he is hired by a non-Bahá'í in the area but is then fired as a result of pressure brought upon his employer, under various pretences, by Intelligence agents.
- On 5 November 2018, the shops belonging to two Bahá'ís were sealed by the authorities in Khuzestan Province prior to the Bahá'í holy days on 9 and 10 November. Their shops were sealed after they had gone to the *Amaken* to inform officials that they would be closing their the shops on those days.
- On 10 November 2018, the Commanding Office of the Security and Intelligence Disciplinary Police of Omidieh filed a complaint against nine shop owners in Omidieh, Khuzestan, by the names of Mr. Ali-Reza Afshar, Mr. Farhad Afshar, Mr. Hamed Afshar,

Mr. Saied Afshar, Mr. Kamal Afshari, Mr. Nadim Azizi, Mr. Amin Behbahani, Mr. Mustafa Ebadi, and Mr. Arsalan Farzaneh, for “propaganda of misguided Bahá’í ideology through closure of shops.” The judge, subsequent to hearing the defence on 26 November 2018, relied on the fact that the “mere act of closure of shops does not substantiate propaganda of misguided ideology, nor can it be considered propaganda against the sacred regime,” and issued a writ of non-prosecution. Since the complainant did not file an appeal within the usual allotted time (20 days after the issuance of the decision), the case was closed and, ultimately, on 6 January 2019, the relevant shops were unsealed.

- On 12 November 2018, shops belonging to five Bahá’ís in Ahvaz were sealed due to having closed their shops in observance of Bahá’í holy days. The list of those whose shops have been sealed are as follows: Jahanbakhsh Afsharzadeh (interior design), Sohrab Derakhshan (interior design), Vargha Derakhshan (interior design), Feizollah Ghanavatian (television repair shop), and Behrouz Zohdi (interior design). These businesses were unsealed on 27 November 2018. By way of background, Messrs. Vargha and Sohrab Derakhshan, and Ghanavatian were among 11 Bahá’ís who had their businesses closed by the authorities for the same reason in July 2017.
- It was learned in December 2018 that a letter was sent from the National Chief Deputy Prosecutor General addressed to the Deputy Prosecutor General on Political and Social Affairs concerning the sealing of Bahá’í-owned businesses. The letter states that “The sealing of shops that are properly licenced, in the absence of any criminal wrongdoing, and solely for the reason of being owned by Bahá’ís, has no legal merit.
- On 2 and 3 December, ten Bahá’í-owned businesses in Omidieh were sealed because they had closed to observe the Bahá’í holy days, which happened to fall during the Islamic holy days in the month of *Muharram*.
- It was learned in January 2019 that the renewal of the business licence of Mr. Farshid Daymi, a resident of Birjand, South Khorasan, who has a long history of selling computer equipment, was recently denied owing to him being a Bahá’í.
- On 5 January 2019, 18 months after the sealing of Bahá’í owned businesses in Orumiyeh, and in light of the judicial efforts of the owners, the Provincial Security Council agreed to the unsealing of the businesses, subject to the shop owners undertaking to respect the trade regulations. The Bahá’ís provided the authorities with an amended version of the undertaking which was accepted. Based on this agreement, the Provincial Security Council issued orders to unseal the premises. In the past year and a half, the Bahá’í business owners in Orumiyeh have made unceasing and united efforts on the local, provincial, and national levels to redeem their rights.

Appendix 5

Provisional English translation of a letter dated 9 April 2007 from the Public Intelligence and Security Force F.A.A.—Public Places Supervision Office (*Amaken*), to the Commanders of Police Forces of the Provincial Regional Municipalities—Heads of the Public Intelligence and Security Force.

[Personal information has been redacted.]

[Emblem]

Police Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran (NAJA)

[Emblem]

Islamic Republic of Iran

Number 1314\2\22

Date: 19/1/1386 [9 April 2007]

Enclosure: With enclosure

From: The Public Intelligence and Security Force F.A.A. (F.A.A., Headquarters of Intelligence and Security in the province of Tehran)—Public Places Supervision Office

To: Esteemed Commanders of Police Forces of the Provincial Regional Municipalities—Heads of the Public Intelligence and Security Force;

Subject: Review of the eligibility of individuals belonging to anti-revolutionary political organizations and other illegal groups and to the perverse Bahá'í sect

[Stamp:] Faxed

Greetings,

May peace be upon Mohammad and His family! With respect, based on the instructions received from the Head of the Public Intelligence and Security Force (NAJA)—Public Places Supervision (number 31/2/5/30/14, dated 21/12/85 (12 March 2007))—and noting the increase in the number of requests from the adherents of the perverse Bahá'í sect to obtain business licences and secure their rightful and legal presence in the trade community once they have acquired their business licences; and in order to facilitate the ongoing monitoring and supervision of their activities and to halt—to the extent possible—the Bahá'ís extensive presence in sensitive and important trade organizations, as well as to stop individuals from anti-revolutionary political organizations and other illegal groups from requesting business licences, it is necessary for measures to be taken, as outlined in the points below, which are based on instruction number 100/7/30/14, dated 17/2/82 (8 May 2003) Final Review Commission, which specifies the type of cases to go before the Commission.

A. Perverse Bahá'í sect

1. Take measures to identify Bahá'í individuals with businesses and collect statistics on their dispersal and types of occupation.

2. Their activities in high-earning businesses should be halted, and only those business licences that would provide them with an ordinary livelihood should be allowed.

3. Issuing of business licences to such individuals should be prevented for activities in the sensitive categories of culture, advertising, and commerce, which includes businesses such as newspaper and periodical shops, jewellery and watchmaking shops, coffee shops, gravures, the tourist industry, car rentals, publishing and bookselling, hostel and hotel management, tailoring training institutes, photography and film recording, Internet gaming, computing, and Internet cafes.

4. In accordance with the religious canons, business licences will not be issued to the followers of the perverse Bahá'í sect in business categories related to cleanliness

1. catering at reception halls,
2. buffets and restaurants,
3. grocery shops,
4. kebab shops,
5. cafes,
6. protein (poultry) shops and supermarkets,
7. ice cream parlours, fruit juice and soft drink shops,
8. pastry shops,
9. coffee shops.

B. Anti-revolutionary political organizations and other illegal groups

1. Members of anti-revolutionary political organizations and groups and their relatives do not have right of candidacy for, and membership on, the boards of directors of unions and cooperatives.

Also, business licences will not be issued for:

2. travel accommodation businesses such as hotels, hostels, hotels, etc.,
3. printing,
4. publishing and bookselling,
5. childcare,
6. private institutions,
7. the tourist industry and car rentals,
8. real estate,
9. stamp-making,
10. arms and munitions sales,
11. sales of chemical substances,
12. photography and film recording,
13. Internet cafes and Internet gaming,
14. computing,
15. cultural, art and advertising organizations (this also applies to the aforementioned individuals who are seeking to obtain a supervisor's card),
16. The businesses of such individuals must not be located in the vicinity of places categorized as sensitive.

17. Those from anti-revolutionary political and other illegal groups, who are in other categories of the trade and have been released or pardoned are considered ordinary citizens and, as with other applicants, a file will be created for them.

18. Kindly confirm receipt of the aforementioned instruction.

Head of Public Intelligence and Security Force F.A.A.
F.A.A., Headquarters of Intelligence and Security Tehran

Revolutionary Guard Colonel Hoseini

[Signature]

Revolutionary Guard Colonel Mehdi Mahmoudi

Recipients:

1. Esteemed Head of the Public Intelligence and Security Force NAJA (Naja)—Public Places Supervision; for information refer to number 31/2/5/30/14 dated 21/12/85 (12 March 2007).

2. Esteemed Head of the Eligibility Evaluation Office—Public Places Supervision Office F.A.A. F.A.A., Headquarters of Intelligence and Security Tehran, for information and action as described above.

3. Esteemed Head of the Control and Supervision Office—Public Places Supervision Office F.A.A. F.A.A., Headquarters of Intelligence and Security Tehran, for information and action as described above.

[Handwritten note at the bottom of the page] [Illegible]

Copy of Persian original of a letter dated 9 April 2007 from the Public Intelligence and Security Force F.A.A.—Public Places Supervision Office (Amaken), to the Commanders of Police Forces of the Provincial Regional Municipalities—Heads of the Public Intelligence and Security Force.

شماره: ۱۳۴۲/۲۲
تاریخ: ۱۹ اردیبهشت ۸۷
پوست: (رور)

جمهوری اسلامی ایران

از پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی ف.ا.ا. تهران - اداره نظارت بر اماکن عمومی
به: فرماندهان محترم انتظامی شهرستانهای تابعه - روسای پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی
موضوع: بررسی صلاحیت افراد گروهکی و فرقه ضاله بهائیت
سلامت باد

باصوات بر محمد و آل محمد (ص) و با احترام، به استناد دستورالعمل واصله از ریاست محترم پلیس اطلاعات و امنیت عمومی ناجا - نظارت بر اماکن عمومی (بشماره ۱۴/۳۰/۵/۲/۳۶ مورخه ۱۵/۱۲/۲۱) و با عنایت به افزایش مراجعات و بستگان به فرقه ضاله بهائیت جهت اخذ پروانه کسب و حضور موجه و قانونی آنها در جامعه اصناف پس از اخذ پروانه، ضروری است بمنظور کنترل و نظارت مستمر بر فعالیت آنان و حتی المقدور جلوگیری از حضور وسیع آنان در سطح صنوف حساس و مهم و سازمانهای صنفی و همچنین افراد گروهکی متقاضی پروانه کسب ضمن مد نظر قرار دادن موارد ذیل برابر دستور العمل شماره ۱۴/۳۰/۷/۱۰۰ مورخه ۸۲/۲/۱۷ (کمیسیون بررسی نهایی) که نوع پرونده های قابل طرح در کمیسیون را مشخص می نماید اقدام گردد.

الف) فرقه ضاله بهائیت:

(۱) نسبت به شناسائی افراد بهائی شاغل در صنوف و جمع آوری آمار به تفکیک (میزان پراکندگی، نوع رسته شغلی) اقدام نمایند.

(۲) از فعالیت آنان مشاغل با درآمد زانی بلا جلوگیری و صرفاً با صدور مجوز یا پروانه کسب در رسته های شغلی که بتوانند در حد متعارف امرار معاش نمایند موافقت گردد.

(۳) از صدور مجوز فعالیت برای افراد مذکور در رسته های شغلی حساس (فروشنده، تپالغاتی، اقتصادی، نظیر جراید، نشریات، جواهر و طلا سازی و ساعت و چاپخانه داران، و تعمیرات و سازان، مؤسسات توریستی و اتومبیل کرایه، ناشران کتابفروشان، مسافرخانه داران، هتلداران، آموزشگاههای خیاطی، عکاسی و فیلمبرداری، گیم نت، امانت، کافه نت) جلوگیری بعمل آورند.

(۴) در راستای اجرای احکام شرعی برای پیروان فرقه ضاله بهائیت جهت فعالیت در رسته های شغلی مشروط به طهارت (۱- نالارهای پذیرائی ۲- رستوران و سلف سرویس ۳- اغذیه فروشان و مواد غذایی ۴- جلوگیری و جلوگیری خوردن ۵- قهوه خانه ۶- فروشندهگان مواد پروتئینی و سوپر مارکت ۷- بستنی و آهلبوسه و نوشابه ۸- قنادی و شیرینی فروشی ۹- مکانهای شاپ پروانه صادر نمیگردد.

فایکس نشانی

استاد امانت

The following are some examples of Bahá'ís being denied a right to education that have occurred since July 2018.

- Up to November 2018, the total number of Bahá'í students who have shared that they were deprived from accessing higher education in the present school year on the basis of having an “incomplete file” is 109.
- It was confirmed in July 2018 that Mrs. Sowgol Zabihi-Seisan was expelled from Rasam University in Karaj, during her fourth term of Graphics studies, because of her religious beliefs.
- It was learned in October 2018 that a lawyer has been investigating the cases of Bahá'í candidates for the National University Entrance Examination who were told they had an “incomplete file”. The lawyer learned that the students’ files were transferred to a provincial court, where they are being kept in a large cabinet, thus preventing them from being processed. The lawyer has emphatically asked the head of the Branch to resolve this issue as the delay will cause further infringement on his clients’ rights.
- It was learned in January 2019 that Ms. Shadi Shoghi, a student of Najafabad University of Applied Science and Technology, was expelled from the University after four terms of study.
- It was learned in January 2019 that Mrs. Elmira Sayyar Mahdavi, an undergraduate student in photo-advertising, was expelled from Karaj University of Applied Science and Technology during her third term.
- It was learned in January 2019 that Ms. Sama Nazifi, a student in architecture at Azad University in Shahriar, who was a top student last year, was expelled from the university for being a Bahá'í.
- It was learned in January 2019 that Mr. Badi Safajou, a student in chemical engineering at Azad University of Sciences and Research in Tehran with a high grade point average of 3.7 (out of 4.0), was expelled for being a Bahá'í during his seventh term. There was a great deal of support for him from students, university professors, and faculty members, who expressed their sentiments in hundreds of comments.

A poll, titled “Expulsion of a Bahá'í student,” was initiated on the Instagram account of Azad University, which has approximately 95,000 members. The poll asked participants to indicate if they were in favour of or against the expulsion of Mr. Safajou from university. In the poll, 81% of participants expressed that they were against his expulsion. The polling page was deleted after nine days, by order of the security authorities. Relevant documentation in Persian may be provided upon request.

It has been observed that, because of their positive disposition and popularity among their fellow students and professors, other Bahá'í students who are expelled from university also receive similar reactions from students and professors.

- On 9 January 2019, the authorities at Azad University in Sama, Andisheh, summoned Ms. Shirin Baninejad, a fifth term student in applied computer science, and informed her that

she had been expelled from university a month before. Ms. Baninejad was about to complete her associate degree.

Some specific cases of the denial of the right to practice one's belief including cultural rights, desecration and destruction of Bahá'í cemeteries and violation of burial rights that have occurred since the start of July 2018.⁵

- On 23 July 2018, two workers were tiling the mortuary of the Bahá'í Cemetery of Bandar-Abbas when several Intelligence agents, entering the cemetery over the walls, destroyed the tiles that had just been laid and warned the workers that they were not allowed to work there.
- In August 2018, as a result of the authorities' prohibition against burials at the Bahá'í cemetery and despite repeated actions taken and approaches made by the family of a deceased individual, who had passed away on 7 August 2018 in Kerman Province, his body had to be buried, against the family's will, in Rafsanjan, which is over 100 kilometres away.
- On 24 October 2018, Ms. Shamsi Jahan Khanum Azamiyan passed away in Gilavand. Her family decided to bury her in the Gilavanad Bahá'í Cemetery, where the funeral had taken place. It is worth noting that the authorities had previously banned burial in the Gilavanad Bahá'í Cemetery. On 28 October 2018, with an order from the Prosecutor's Office, the authorities exhumed the body. On the same day, the police called one of the Bahá'ís in Gilavand to convey that the authorities had found Ms. Azamiya's corpse in the nearby desert area and transferred it to Tehran Bahá'í Cemetery. The authorities asked the caretakers of Tehran Bahá'í Cemetery to bury the body there, which eventually was done.

⁵ Bahá'í teachings require that the bodily remains of a deceased be buried in a location that is less than an hour's journey from the city in which he or she died.

Appendix 8

Some specific cases regarding the systematic incitement to hatred that have occurred since July 2018.

- In July 2018, it was confirmed that during the 2:00 p.m. news broadcast, the presenting journalist read a letter from an individual who had stated that members of “the perverse Bahá’í sect” turn on their air conditioners and open their windows during the electricity shortage to increase electricity consumption and create difficulties for other Iranians.
- It was learned in July 2018 that at an exhibition in Baharestan from 29 April to 2 May 2018, a six-page anti-Bahá’í pamphlet entitled *Musleh-e-Jahan* was being disseminated, along with many other materials.⁶ A copy of the pamphlet may be shared upon request.
- On 3 October 2018, representatives of Fars Province negatively reacted to the support of some of the members of the City Council and representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly concerning the citizenship rights of the Bahá’ís, and wrote a letter to the Islamic Consultative Assembly. A copy can be shared upon request.

⁶ “Reformer of the world”.