

Fact Sheet on Iranian Bahá'í situation

Summary

Hundreds of thousands of Bahá'ís in Iran—who comprise the largest non-Muslim minority religion in that country—have endured ongoing persecution since their Faith originated there in the mid-19th century, due to severe religious intolerance and the refusal of Bahá'ís to recant their belief in Bahá'u'lláh—the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. In recent months, prominent Iranians of all backgrounds have raised their voices to defend the right of Bahá'ís to live in peace and freedom in their own country, recognizing that the treatment of the Bahá'ís is a litmus test for human rights and civil liberties for all Iranians. Our event is a tribute to *their* continued sacrifices for the cause of religious freedom and human rights for all Iranians.

Your attendance at this event sends a strong message of support for human rights in Iran and is a powerful vehicle to convey this story to the media.

Additional Facts:

- Baha'is in Iran are being held in prison solely because of their religious beliefs.
- Seven leaders of the Iranian Baha'i community have been held in Evin prison in Tehran since the spring of 2008, under charges of “espionage for Israel, desecrating religious sanctities, propaganda against the Islamic Republic and spreading corruption on earth.” If convicted, they could face the death penalty.
- The defendants' lawyer, the Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, has been denied access to the prisoners and their files and no evidence of criminal activity has been presented. The trial has been repeatedly postponed.
- On October, 22, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives passed resolution, H.Res.175, condemning the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran, in a 407-2 vote.

- On March 9, 2009, Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced S. Res. 71, a concurrent resolution to H. Res. 175.
- The Baha'i Faith requires its adherents to obey the laws of the country in which they reside.
- Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, more than 200 Bahá'ís have been killed for their religious beliefs. Thousands have been imprisoned and tortured. Cemeteries have been bulldozed and holy places confiscated and destroyed.
- Baha'is in Iran are prohibited from attending universities because of their religious beliefs.
- Baha'i schoolchildren are harassed and expelled because of their religious beliefs.
- Baha'is believe that all people belong to one human family, that all religions come from the one same God, that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities, and that science and religion are in harmony. Iranian Baha'is face persecution by their government because of such beliefs.

For additional information about the persecution of Baha'is in Iran, please visit <http://iran.bahai.us>