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Human Rights Council, 10th session

***Question for interactive dialogue with Ms. Asma Jahangir,
Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief***

(10 March 2009)

The Bahá'í International Community extends its greetings to all Special Rapporteurs.

Ms. Jahangir, in your report, we note that you communicated with the government of Iran about the case of the seven Bahá'ís who have been detained in the notorious section 209 of Evin prison in Tehran for 10 months – without access to their legal counsel, Mrs. Shirin Ebadi. Your report states that the government has not responded to this communication.

As you know, the Bahá'í Faith has no clergy, and the Iranian authorities banned its elected institutions. These seven detainees had been members of the group organizing the affairs of the Bahá'í community at the national level.

They have still not been formally charged. However, some officials have made baseless accusations against them, such as “espionage, insulting religious sanctities, and propaganda against the Islamic Republic”. It is a cause for concern that these officials have made such statements to the media, while the government had not responded to your communication.

Have you received any information recently from the Iranian government about this case? And what do you think the next steps could be, to protect the (over 300,000) Bahá'ís in Iran?