

Bahá'í International Community

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The Bahá'ís of Iran – A Persecuted Community

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Following the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, members of the Bahá'í Faith—the largest religious minority in the country—have been subjected to a relentless campaign of persecution. This persecution has impacted the lives of generations, from young infants to the frail elderly.

In the words of the former-United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, Iranian Bahá'ís experience persecution “from the cradle to the grave, and beyond.”

Since the mid-nineteenth century, early adherents of the Faith faced violent opposition from the ruling establishment in Iran, which responded to its growth with fierce opposition, inciting violence against followers of the new religion. The persecution continued intermittently thereafter with varying degrees of severity and the Bahá'ís were often being used as scapegoats.

From the early 1980s, Bahá'ís have suffered under a new wave of persecution, this time systematic and, clearly, state-sponsored. The campaign initially targeted many Bahá'ís of influence and those who served on Bahá'í administrative institutions at the local and national levels. In August 1980, for example, all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly—an elected national council that forms part of the Bahá'í administrative structure in all countries—together with two individuals serving on other Bahá'í institutions, were abducted by a group of armed men from their meeting in a private home and taken to an unknown location. These individuals disappeared without a trace, presumably the victims of extrajudicial killings, although the government authorities have never admitted to this fact. In the years that immediately followed, members subsequently elected to this council, as well as scores of other Bahá'ís, were executed by the government without due process of law. On 29 August 1983, the Iranian Attorney General announced a legal ban on all Bahá'í administrative and community activities in Iran, making membership of Bahá'í administrative institutions a criminal offence.¹

In response to this announcement, in an open letter dated 3 September 1983, addressed to Iranian authorities, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran detailed the abuses faced by the Bahá'ís in the Islamic Republic, and appealed to the Iranian people and the Islamic government to restore their rights as Iranian citizens and as human beings. This letter was the final act of the National Spiritual Assembly before it voluntarily dissolved itself and the rest of the administrative

¹This ban was announced in a statement by the Attorney General, published in the newspaper *Kayhan* on 29 August 1983; translated excerpt from statement reads as follows: “Now, if a Baha'i himself performs his religious acts in accordance with his own beliefs, such a man will not be bothered by us, provided he does not invite others to Baha'ism, does not teach, does not form assemblies, does not give news to others, and has nothing to do with the administration. Not only do we not execute such people, we do not even imprison them, and they can work within society. If, however, they decide to work within their administration, this is a criminal act and is forbidden, the reason being that such administration is considered to be hostile and conspiratorial and such people are conspirators.”

structures within the country as a demonstration of goodwill towards the government.

Since then, over 200 Iranian Bahá'ís have been executed or murdered, thousands have been arrested, detained and interrogated, and tens of thousands more have been deprived of jobs, pensions, and educational opportunities. The Bahá'í community's holy places, cemeteries, and properties have been confiscated, vandalized, or destroyed, and many Bahá'ís have had their homes and other property seized or damaged.

The official policy of the Iranian government against their Bahá'í citizens is summarized in a government memorandum obtained in 1993 by the UN Special Representative on the Human Rights Situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.² Produced in 1991 by Iran's Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and approved by the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, this document, entitled 'The Bahá'í Question', sets forth specific guidelines for dealing with the Bahá'ís. It states that "[t]he government's dealings with [Bahá'ís] must be in such a way that their progress and development are blocked". It outlines a series of measures to restrict the educational, economic, and cultural life of Iranian Bahá'ís. This memorandum remains in effect today.

In 2008, all seven members of the Yárán, or "the Friends"—an ad hoc group tending to the social and spiritual needs of the Bahá'í community in Iran, created because of the ban on Bahá'í administration and with the knowledge and approval of the government—were arrested. They were suddenly declared illegal and disbanded, with each individual sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment of which they served 10 years and were finally released in 2018.

Iran has, to date, been reviewed three times under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), in February 2010, in October 2014, and more recently in November 2019. In 2010, Iran accepted a number of recommendations, while also claiming that some others had either already been implemented, or were in the process of implementation. In 2014, of the 10 recommendations that dealt specifically with the situation of the Bahá'ís, only two of them were partially accepted by the Iranian government. However, the Bahá'í International Community, in a recent analysis of the implementation of these recommendations, accepted by Iran in 2010 and 2014, confirmed that not a single one has yet been implemented.³ In effect, by failing to abide by the commitments and assurances it made to the international community, Iran has gravely undermined the entire UPR process. In the most recent third cycle UPR, Iran also supported, or partially supported, a number of recommendations, which it has again failed to adhere to. The sections that follow provide an overview of the current situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran in relation to the third cycle UPR and contain a sample of the latest reported and confirmed cases of persecution.

² The text of the 1991 government memorandum can be accessed through the following links:

Persian original:

<<https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/iran/1991%20Bahai%20Question%20Memo%20PER.pdf>>; English translation: <<https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/iran/1991%20Bahai%20Question%20Memo%20ENG.pdf>>.

³ See Islamic Republic of Iran: Non-implementation of accepted and partially-accepted UPR recommendations - Concerning human rights violations against Iranian Bahá'ís (January 2018),

<https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/iran/iran_upr_mid-term_report_january_2018.pdf>.

See also Bahá'í International Community's publication *Unfulfilled Promises: Iran's failure to act after its 2010 Universal Periodic Review*, <<https://www.bic.org/publications/unfulfilled-promises#vv1u85hTO0ISXzhR.99>>.

I. Home Raids, Unlawful Arrests, Arbitrary Detentions, and Violations of Due Process

In violation of third cycle UPR recommendations #26.1, 26.46, 26.145, 26.170, 26.172, 26.176, 26.178, and 26.180.

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 throughout the country, and the charges they are accused of reflect the absence of freedom of religion or belief for Bahá'ís in Iran. Sadly, the situation did not improve with the election of President Hassan Rouhani. Under his presidency, we documented at least **676** arrests of Bahá'ís and summons to prison. In the last year, there have been **47** arrests.

Those who are arrested suffer ill-treatment at the hands of governmental officials. As the number of arrests and imprisonments continue, there are still grave concerns owing to the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) through the prison system and in the country. For those who are arrested they are 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. Others are serving their unjust sentences under conditions which are now further compounded by the risk of being unnecessarily exposed to the virus in Iran's overcrowded prison system.

In nearly all cases of those detained, their homes and/or workplaces are searched and the usual items, such as personal belongings, are confiscated, particularly books, photographs, computers, copying machines, and other supplies, as well as items related to the Bahá'í Faith.

With the recent election of Ebrahim Raisi as Iran's soon to be president, the regime's adherence to due process and equal citizens' rights as detailed in Iran's own Constitution and its obligations under its international commitments will have to be closely monitored.

Below are some examples of recent home raids, arrests and detentions, and sentencing of Bahá'ís in Iran merely because of their religious beliefs.

- On the morning of 25 April 2021, the homes of at least 14 Bahá'í families in the Baharestan City of Isfahan were raided and searched by security agents in two stages. The raids began at about 6 a.m. on Sunday and lasted until about 1 p.m., often with the use of violence. At least nine Bahá'ís—Ms. Maryam Khorsandi, Ms. Firouzeh Rastinejad (Behnam), Ms. Sanaz Rasteh, Ms. Azita Rezvani (who was in poor health suffering from COVID-19 and was being treated at home), Ms. Mojgan Pourshafi, Ms. Nasrin Khademi, Mr. Afshin Vojdani, and his wife Mrs. Noushin Hemmat—were arrested and transferred to an unknown location. In addition, the security agents searched the homes of Ms. Sanam Behin-Aien, an 83-year-old, and Ms. Boushra Motahhar.

Ms. Khorsandi was detained despite undergoing chemotherapy, and was not able to take any medication with her. Ms. Khorsandi's family had recently moved from Baharestan to Isfahan. At the time of her arrest, the security agents entered the house of Ms. Khorsandi by climbing

the wall, searched her house and confiscated many personal belongings, including cell phones, laptops, books, pictures related to the Bahá'í Faith and cash.

Further, the security agents showed an arrest warrant and severely beat Mr. Vojdani during his detention. Mr. Vojdani and his wife, Mrs. Noushin Hemmat, had just moved to a new house. The security agents removed the items from the moving boxes, confiscated books and pamphlets related to the Bahá'í Faith, and filmed the process. After that, they went to Mrs. Hemmat's mother's house in Isfahan, where they confiscated her laptop, tablet and hard drive.

The second stage of the mass raids included the arrest of Ms. Roya Azadkhosh and searches of the homes of at least five other Bahá'ís, including Ms. Mojdeh Behamin, Ms. Elnaz Khavas, Ms. Akram Ettehadi, Ms. Nahid Rezvani, and Ms. Zareie. The home searches were carried out by a large number of security agents.

During all the raids, officers confiscated a number of personal belongings, including family photographs, laptops, some CDs, cell phones, books and pamphlets related to the Bahá'í Faith.

Mr. Vojdani was released hours after his arrest. Regarding the other arrested individuals, they were released from Dolatabad Prison in Isfahan after posting bail. Ms. Khorsandi was released on 17 May 2021; Ms. Azadkhosh and Ms. Khademi were released on 18 May; Ms. Rasteh and Ms. Rastinejad (Behnam) were released on bail on 20 May; Mrs. Hemmat and Ms. Azita Rezvani were released on 22 May; and Ms. Mojgan Poursahfi was released on 23 May 2021.

Separately, at 6:45 a.m., when Mr. Sina Shakib and Ms. Sara Shakib (brother and sister) left their house by car, they were stopped by two cars of security agents, who got them out of their car and took their mobile phones. The two Bahá'ís were treated harshly and very violently. Following Mr. Sina Shakib's protest, he was beaten, transferred to another car, blindfolded and handcuffed. Ms. Sara Shakib was also taken to another car and was shown a search warrant for their house. Finally, 16 security agents arrived in 4 cars, raided and inspected all 3 floors of the house and after a complete inspection, showed the arrest warrant for Ms. Sara Shakib and took her away; she was released on bail from Dolatabad Prison on 22 May 2021.

- Following the arrests and searches of the homes of the Bahá'ís mentioned above, on 28 April 2021, two more Bahá'ís, Mr. Vahid Dana and Mr. Saied Abedi were arrested by the intelligence agents at their home in Shiraz. They were then held in solitary confinement in the Detention Centre No. 100 of the Fars Intelligence Office. At some point they were then moved to Adelabad Prison in Shiraz. The pair were finally released on 1 June 2021 from Adelabad Prison after posting bail and are now awaiting their trial.

During their detention, the security agents searched their homes and confiscated some of their personal belongings, including cell phones, personal computers, a number of books, and images related to the Bahá'í Faith.

You will recall that Mr. Dana and Mr. Abedi were arrested in 2014. At trial in 2018, they were both sentenced to 1 year's imprisonment under *tazir* law, and 1 year of exile to remote regions of Fars Province, for "propaganda against the regime in support of the enemies."⁴ In 2019, the Court of Appeal quashed the exile and reduced their individual sentences to 6 months of imprisonment, however, they were pardoned in the Clemency Circular, which was issued on 22 Bahman (11 February 2019) by the government.

- On 30 April 2021, Ms. Shourangiz Behamin was arrested at her father's house in Boyer-Ahmad. Security agents had searched her relative's house in Baharestan, Isfahan (mentioned above) on 25 April 2021 and confiscated many of their personal belongings. She was subsequently transferred to Dolatabad Prison in Isfahan and was released on bail on 22 May 2021.
- It was reported on 19 June 2021 that following the raids of three Bahá'í homes by the security agents in Falavarjan, the western area of Isfahan, Mr. Ahmad Kiani Ashtarjani, and his daughter Ms. Helina Kiani Ashtarjani, and Ms. Mina Ramazani Teshnizi are standing trial on charges of "propaganda against the regime of the Islamic Republic". The hearing of these individuals is currently in progress; for the first time since its ratification, recurrent Articles 499 and 500 of the *Tazirat* law have been relied upon in a ruling. The court order can be found in Appendix 1.⁵
- On 14 June 2021, Mr. Sina Kamali Sarvestani, a Bahá'í in Shiraz, was arrested by security agents in front of his house and following the search of his home and confiscation of all of his family members' electronics, including phones, laptops, and a number of books, he was transferred to an unknown location.
- Also on 14 June 2021, around 4:00 p.m., Mrs. Dursa Dehghani, a Bahá'í in Shiraz, was arrested by the security agents at the city's train station and was taken home where the security agents searched and confiscated some of her personal belongings, including her mobile phone, books, pictures and Baha'i related documents. She was then transferred to an unknown location.
- It was learnt on 8 June 2021 that Mrs. Shahrzad Nazifi, a Bahá'í in Tehran was sentenced by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Iman Afshari. Mrs. Nazifi was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment under *tazir* law charged with "managing unlawful groups for the purpose of disturbing national security". The guilty verdict was issued in absentia and conveyed to Mrs. Nazifi's lawyer. Mrs. Nazifi, has also been sentenced to supplementary punishment; for 3 months she must provide 4 hours per day of compulsory services in order to care for patients with mental disabilities in coordination with the Welfare Department of Tehran Province. She also received a 2 year ban on leaving the country. Mrs. Nazifi is one of the champions and trainers of women's motocross in Iran.

⁴ *Tazir law* (discretionary punishment): Punishment with maximum and minimum limits determined by law and judge, respectively.

⁵ *Tazirat*: Government department of discretionary punishments.

- It was learnt on 20 May 2021 that Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals of the Tehran Province upheld the convictions of Ms. Mona Mehrabi, Ms. Elham Karampisheh, Ms. Afsaneh Yadegar Ardestani and Mr. Ehsanullah Yadegar Ardestani, four Baha'is from Varamin. Previously, each of these four Bahá'ís were sentenced by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Mohammad-Reza Amouzad, to 3 years in prison under *tazir* law on charges of “membership in unlawful administration with intent to disturb national security.” Two other Bahá'ís, Mrs. Safa Forghani and Mr. Mehrdad Forghani were each sentenced by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran to 5 years in prison under *tazir* law on charges of “membership in unlawful administration with intent to disturb national security.”
- On 19 May 2021, the Revolutionary Court in Dashtestan Township (Borazjan) sentenced Mr. Borhan Esmaili to 11 years' imprisonment under *tazir* law for “propaganda activity against the regime by way of spreading sectarian Bahá'í ideology”, and for “action against national security by way of spreading and teaching sectarian Bahá'í ideology”. Ms. Maryam Bashir, Mrs. Faranak Sheikhi (wife of Borhan), and Borhan's daughters, Ms. Haideh Ram, Ms. Minou Bashir, and Ms. Dorna Esmaili, were each sentenced to 12 years and six months' imprisonment under *tazir* law for involvement in “propaganda activities against the regime by way of spreading sectarian Bahá'í ideology”, “production and distribution of improper photos online and on social media”, and for “action against national security by way of spreading and teaching sectarian Bahá'í ideology”. Further details on this case can be provided upon request.
- It was learnt on 13 May 2021 that Mrs. Atousa Ahmadaie Rafsanjani, a Bahá'í in Tehran, whose case has been pending for the past two years in Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, was transferred to Branch 26, presided over by Judge Afshari. Without carefully studying her case file, Judge Afshari sentenced her to 4 years in prison under *tazir* law on charges of “formation of groups with intent to disturb national security”, 3 years in prison under *tazir* law on charges of “assembly and collusion with the purpose of action against the security of the country” and one year in prison under *tazir* law on charges of “engaging in propaganda against the regime”. She has appealed the verdict, with her case being referred to Branch 36 of the Tehran Court of Appeals.
- It was learnt on 5 May 2021 that Mrs. Sholeh Ashouri, a Bahá'í of Baharestan, Isfahan, who was living in Hendijan for two years, was arrested and taken to an unknown location. Earlier, the security agents had searched the house of Mrs. Ashouri's father with an arrest warrant. During her arrest, security agents climbed the wall of her house while her husband was not at home and they confiscated many of their personal belongings, including cell phones, books, pictures, and items related to the Bahá'í Faith.

Mrs. Ashouri was subsequently transferred to one of the Detention Centres of the security agency in Baharestan, Isfahan. On 22 May 2021, she was released from Dolatabad Prison in Isfahan after posting bail.

- It was learnt on 19 April 2021 that Ms. Manijeh Azamian, a Bahá'í from Babol, was arrested by security agents on 13 April and was released from Babol prison on bail a day later. A few days before her arrest, on 12 April, security agents searched Ms. Azamian's home and confiscated some of her personal belongings, including cell phones, computer hard drives, flash drives as well as pictures and books related to the Bahá'í Faith. The security agents asked her to report to the Babol Intelligence Office for questioning that afternoon. Following the search of her home until her arrest, Ms. Azamian was interrogated for several hours at different times by security agents.
- It was learnt on 14 April 2021 that Mr. Moin Mohammadi, a Bahá'í of Yazd, was again sentenced to 3 years and 3 months in prison despite spending 1 year in the city with an electronic monitoring ankle bracelet. His sentence came after the prosecutor protested the decision made by the Court of Appeals. Mr. Mohammadi's case was then referred to Branch 39 of the Supreme Court for retrial and the original verdict by Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Yazd was upheld. His final sentence was 31 months and 16 days in prison under *tazir* law on charges of "membership in a group opposing the regime" and 7 months and 16 days in prison under *tazir* law on charges of "propaganda against the Islamic regime and in support of groups opposing the regime."

By way of background, in July 2019, Mr. Mohammadi was acquitted by Branch 11 of the Yazd Court of Appeals on charges of "membership in the group opposing the regime" and sentenced to one year in prison in Yazd on the charge of "engaging in propaganda against the regime" and was under supervision with electronic monitoring ankle bracelet. He was finally released on 4 May 2020 after serving his sentence.

- Starting around 9:30 p.m. on 6 April 2021 to about 3:00 a.m. on 7 April 2021, security agents raided and searched the homes of at least 13 Bahá'í families and one workplace in Shiraz. During the raid they confiscated personal belongings such as identification documents, pictures, books, mobile phones, and laptops. Some of these houses were searched without a warrant and when they were prevented from entering the house due to the lack of a warrant, the residents faced violence, intimidation, beatings and security agents even attempted to break down doors.

Following the raids, Mr. Behrouz Farzandi Ardakani, Mr. Saeid Etehad, Mr. Ghasem Masoumi, Mr. Siamak Honarvar, Mr. Soroush Abadi, Ms. Sedigheh Aghdasi, and Ms. Aliyyeh Foroutan were arrested and transferred to a detention centre in Shiraz.

Mr. Ardakani, Ms. Aghdasi, and Mr. Etehad were released on bail pending trial after having spent around 27 days in detention. Later, it was learnt on 16 May 2021 that Mr. Abadi, Mr. Honarvar, Ms. Foroutan, and Mr. Masoumi, were also released on bail pending trial.

Mr. Abadi was held in Detention Centre No. 100 of the Fars Intelligence Office and Mr. Masoumi was held in one of the Sepah Intelligence Detention Centres.⁶ Also, Mr. Honarvar and Ms. Foroutan spent a considerable amount of time in solitary confinement in the Police Detention Centre No. 201 in Shiraz after their arrests.

Some of these individuals have faced persecution in the past. Mr. Ardakani (who is one of the wounded and former prisoners of war from the Iran-Iraq war and who has been under medical care for the past 25 years due to heart disease, and neurological and hearing problems caused by a blast wave in the war), and Mr. Etehad faced issues related to their denial of higher education by university officials on 26 October 2009 and 10 August 2014 respectively. Further, Mr. Abadi was previously arrested on 21 October 2019 and released on bail on 7 November 2019.

- On 7 April 2021, the home of Mr. William Momtazian, a Bahá'í of Shiraz, was searched by security forces, and a number of the family's personal belongings, including computers, cell phones, electronics and Bahá'í books and works were confiscated.
- The home of Mr. Ahmad Karami was searched on 7 April 2021 by security agents. At the time of the search, the agents asked Ms. Mina Karami (daughter of Mr. Karami) to promise to report to the detention center of the Fars Intelligence Office whenever she is summoned. On 16 April 2021, Ms. Mina Karami was phoned and summoned to the Fars Intelligence Office. On 17 April 2021, Ms. Karami went to the Fars Intelligence Office and after 4 hours of interrogation returned home.
- On 7 April 2021, the homes of at least two other Bahá'ís, Ms. Hayedeh Foroutan and Mr. Karamat Nik-Aien, also in Fars province, were searched by security agents.

Security agents went to the home of Mr. Nik-Aien and his wife, Mrs. Negareh Ghaderi Saadi, and searched the home, confiscating a number of personal items, including cell phones and tablets, as well as all books, writings, and pictures related to the Bahá'í Faith.

On the same morning, Ms. Foroutan's house was also searched by security agents. In addition to the family's personal belongings and the Bahá'í books and pictures in the house, a number of personal belongings of the family's guests including mobile phones and laptops were confiscated.

- It was learnt on 21 February 2021 that Mrs. Afsaneh Imami, Mr. Hamid Naseri, and Mr. Saied Naseri were sentenced to prison by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Mohammad-Reza Amouzad. All three were charged with "membership in the unlawful administration of perverse Bahá'í group for the purpose of action against national security". Mrs. Afsaneh Imami was sentenced to 3 years in prison under *tazir* law, Mr. Hamid Naseri and Mr. Saied Naseri (husband of Mrs. Imami) were each sentenced to two years in prison. These Bahá'ís were previously sentenced to imprisonment in absentia and without a hearing by Branch 28 headed by Judge Iman Afshari, however,

⁶ *Sepah-i-Pasdarán*: Islamic Revolutionary Guard.

even after accepting the protest application and holding a court hearing, the sentences were still upheld.

- It was learnt on 8 February 2021 that Branch 2 of the Court of Appeals in the Province of Hormozgan upheld the conviction of eight Bahá'ís in that province. They were previously sentenced under *tazir* law by Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court in Bandar Abbas to a cumulative 14 years in prison between them on charges of assembly and collusion with the purpose of disrupting national security.

Mr. Farhad Amri and Mr. Adib Haghajouh were sentenced to one year of imprisonment, while Mrs. Mahnaz Jan-Nesar, Mrs. Nasim Ghanavatian, Mr Arash Rasekhi, Mrs. Maral Rasti, Mr. Mehrollah Afshar, and Mr. Omid Afaghi were sentenced to two years' imprisonment under *tazir* law. As a supplementary punishment, all persons accused are banned from membership in social and political parties and groups, including attending Feasts and Bahá'í gatherings for a period of two years.⁷ In addition, they are mandated to attend five sessions of counselling on sectarian issues under the supervision of professors at Andisheh Sajjadih Institute in Bandar Abbas. Should the named individuals fail to comply with the terms of the supplementary punishment, the court will, in the first instance, increase the terms of the supplementary punishment by one-third, and, if repeated, will change the punishment to imprisonment or a monetary fine. Further information and documentation regarding this case can be provided upon request.

- It was learnt on 21 January 2021 that Mrs. Sofia Mobini and Mrs. Negin Tadrissi were each sentenced to five years in prison under *tazir* law by Branch 28 Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Mohammad-Reza Amouzad, on charges of “activities against the national security through managing the Bahá'í organization and its promotion” under Article 498 of the Islamic Penal Code. Further, Judge Moghiseh in the same branch of the court, without arraignment charged them with “membership in the illegal Baha'i organization with intent to disturb national security” under Article 499 of the Islamic Penal Code, and sentenced them to 10 and 5 years imprisonment respectively. On appeal, Branch 36 of the Court of Appeal in Tehran reduced their sentence to five years in prison each. By way of background, Mrs. Mobini and Mrs. Tadrissi were first arrested by intelligence agents on 26 October 2017 in connection with the celebrations of a Bahá'í holy day. At trial, Mrs. Mobini was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment by Branch 26 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court for alleged “formation and management of an illegal Bahá'í group with intent to disturb national security; Mrs. Tadrissi was sentenced by the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Isfahan to 5 years of imprisonment for alleged “collusion and assembly against national security.”
- On 11 January 2021, the security agents went to the home of Mrs. Tina Alavi (Enayatipour), in Karaj, and confiscated some of her personal belongings including her computer, mobile devices, and work equipment.
- At 8 a.m. on 12 January 2021, six agents went to the home of Mr. Masihollah Mohammadi in Mashhad. The authorities used intimidation and force, causing such fear that Mr.

⁷ Feasts: Once in every nineteen days, meetings are held in every locality by the Bahá'í community. Known as the “Nineteen Day Feast”, these gatherings serve as the bedrock of Bahá'í community life.

Mohammadi did not ask to see a warrant. His home was searched and Bahá'í books and other materials and documents that were religious in nature were confiscated.

- Mrs. Mahvash Edalati Aliabadi and Mrs. Sepideh Keshavarz, and Mr. Farid Esmaili, have each been sentenced by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeal in Tehran Province to three years and seven months' imprisonment under *tazir* law on charges of “activity against the national security through Bahá'í administration”.

By way of background: The homes of these individuals were raided and searched by the authorities in 2018 at which time they were all arrested and released on bail pending their trial. It was then learnt on 29 January 2021 that they were each sentenced to 4 years and 3 months in prison under *tazir* law by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court presided over by Judge Mohammad-Reza Amouzad. According to the verdict, which was issued on 10 January 2021, each of them was sentenced to 3 years and 7 months on charges of “assembly and collusion activities against the national security through managing the Bahá'í organization” and to 8 months in prison on charges of “propaganda activities against the regime through promotion of the Bahá'í Faith”.

II. Economic Persecution and Confiscation of Property

In violation of third cycle UPR recommendation #26.318.

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 in violation of Article 23.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Part III and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In hundreds of cases, the authorities have taken measures to make it nearly impossible for Bahá'ís to earn a living. 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.

Since 2014, Iranian authorities have intensified their discriminatory policies and practices towards members of the Bahá'í Faith through different measures of economic disruption. In many cities, for example, the authorities systematically seal Bahá'í-owned shops, giving spurious reasons for doing so. 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* (Public Places Supervision Office)⁸ 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.⁹ 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”.

⁸ *Amaken* (Public Places Supervision Office): Is reportedly responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in places of work and other offices.

⁹ Letter dated 9 April 2007 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 the Commanders of Police Forces of the Provincial Regional Municipalities—Heads of the Public Intelligence and Security Force; <<https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/measures-restrict-involvement-bahais-many-business-categories>>.

Furthermore, with the adoption of this governmental policy, applicants applying for business licenses are required to fill out and sign a form asking them to declare their religion. The authorities attempt to actively and pre-emptively deny legal recourse to those already subject to mistreatment under discriminatory regulations. Moreover, since 2006, various trade associations, unions, and business organisations have been instructed to compile lists of Bahá'ís in every type of employment under their purview.¹⁰

During President Rouhani's presidency, there were hundreds of forced shop closures, many of which have yet not been allowed to reopen.

In addition to forced shop closures, the authorities have found a new way to limit the livelihoods of Bahá'ís by confiscating their properties, farmlands and personal homes. A recent ruling by the Constitutional Court has now formalised these confiscations.

On 4 November 2019, the Special Court for Article 49 of the Constitution decided to confiscate all properties belonging to Bahá'ís in the Village of Ivel. In its ruling, the court referred to age-old and discredited conspiracy theories regarding the Bahá'ís and their supposed collusion with the Shah (the previous regime) and other international actors and "enemies" of the Islamic Republic. It is worth noting that these properties were in the possession of the Bahá'ís since the mid-1800s.

On 1 August 2020, Branch 54 of the Special Court for Article 49 of the Constitution in Tehran rejected the appeal and issued a final and binding order upholding the previous decision of the Special Court for Article 49 of the Constitution, Mazandaran Branch handed down on 4 November 2019, which determined that the ownership of the lands belonging to the Bahá'ís of Ivel to be illegal.

In a final decision on 13 October 2020, Branch 8 of the Court of Appeals of Mazandaran citing the 1 August 2020 decision also ruled that the ownership of lands of the 27 Bahá'ís of Ivel were illegal and there was no error made in law, and as such, endorsed the decision in favour of the *Sitád-i-Ijrá'iy-i-Farmán-i-Imám* (the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order, known as EIKO), to forcibly confiscate and sell the lands owned by the Bahá'ís. Following this order, the case was then closed.

These unjust rulings set a precedent with wide-ranging effects throughout the country with the potential to cause mass displacement of the Bahá'í community through a systematic confiscation of their properties.

The mass confiscation of Bahá'í-owned property in Ivel, Mazandaran Province, follows an official Iranian directive which instructs local authorities in another city in the same province to "conduct strict controls" on the Bahá'ís in the city by "monitoring their operations". The directive, dated 21 September 2020, adopted a "detailed plan" to ensure that the Baha'i community is "rigorously controlled", including their "public and private meetings" as well as "their other activities". The

¹⁰ For example, in May 2006, the Trade Affairs Association Manufacturing & Technical Services of Kermanshah sent a letter to the Battery Resellers Trade Union, directing it "to provide this Association with the list of the names of the members of the Baha'i sect who are members of your Union."
<<https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/requesting-names-bahais-battery-trade-kermanshah>>.

document was issued by the Commission on Ethnicities, Sects and Religions in Sari, which operates under the aegis of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, a body chaired by Iran's president and responsible for security matters.¹¹

In addition to the precedent setting cases reported from Ivel, in Mazandaran, below is another recent example.

- It was learnt in October 2020 that four officers, one of them apparently a ranger and the other three agents of the Intelligence Office, went to the Roshankouh area and surveyed it using GPS. Subsequently, on 25 October 2020, representatives from the Sari judiciary, along with officers from the Natural Resources Office and many agents of the disciplinary force, came with an expropriation order for over 15 acres of farmland in Roshankouh and confiscated the lands belonging to two Bahá'í families with an order issued in absentia. It should be noted that as a result of this confiscation, properties belonging to a great number of Bahá'ís, who hold official deeds, will be considered as residing in forest land, instead of local land, thereby providing a possible basis for the authorities to confiscate their land as well.

III. Denial of the Right to Education

A. Access to higher education

In violation of third cycle UPR recommendations #26.229 and 26.302.

Iranian Bahá'ís have long been denied access to higher education. It is an official policy of the government to expel individuals from universities and vocational training institutions as soon as they are identified as members of the Bahá'í community. 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."

In addition, other government documents have been identified that indicate that this discriminatory treatment represents formal and settled official state policy. Chief among these is a communication sent in 2006 by the Central Security Office of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and addressed to 81 Iranian universities, the names of which were listed.¹² The letter instructed these universities to expel any student that was found to be a Bahá'í at the time of enrolment or during their studies. Even during the academic year, university authorities have summoned students and demanded that they identify their religion. Whenever students have been identified as Bahá'ís, they have been expelled.

¹¹ The leaked document was first revealed by the League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran: <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/iran/iran-leaked-document-reveals-plans-to-intensify-suppression-of-baha>

¹² A scanned copy of this letter and a provisional English translation are available at the following link: <https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/bahais-must-be-expelled-university>.

The authorities are well aware that Bahá'ís, as a matter of principle, will not deny or lie about their religious affiliation. Every year, hundreds of Bahá'í students are denied enrolment to universities and other institutions of higher education such as vocational training schools under the pretext of having an “incomplete file”. These young Bahá'ís participate in the national examination and receive high scores making them eligible for entry into university, and yet, they are denied the right to education only because they are Bahá'ís.

The following are a few examples:

- It was learnt on 25 April 2021 that Ms. Hananeh Afshar and Ms. Sana Fakhri Tazangi were expelled from the University of Applied Science and Technology in Shiraz. On 17 March 2021, prior to the new-year holidays, they received a text message which indicated the removal of their units studied in the previous and the current semesters. They found out that their student status was changed to “Registration Cancelled”. After the holidays, they talked to the President of the University and were shown a letter from the deputy director of the Education Department, Mr. Reza Mohammadi, which requested the expulsion of nine Bahá'í students from the Universities of Applied Science and Technology across the country.
- It was learnt on 24 April 2021 that Mr. Sina Shakib, a fourth semester student studying Applied Statistics at the Khansar School of Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Isfahan, was expelled from the university for his belief in the Bahá'í Faith and was barred from continuing his studies. On 19 April 2021, Mr. Shakib noticed that his student account had been blocked when he tried to participate in an online class. He contacted the university's education department and was informed that he had been expelled from the university and barred from continuing his studies through confidential letters sent to him by the office of *Guzinish*.¹³
- On 17 January 2021, Ms Shima Fattahi Mirshekarlu received a message from the Azad University security office in Urmia informing her that she is banned from continuing her studies due to her being a Bahá'í.
- It was learnt on 16 January 2021 that Ms Mahsa Forouhari, a Bahá'í in Karaj, has been banned from the university, on the grounds that her file was “incomplete” due to her being a Bahá'í, despite having a grade point average above 19 (out of 20).

IV. Denial of Cultural Rights, including Desecration and Destruction of Bahá'í Cemeteries and Violations of Burial Rights

In violation of third cycle UPR recommendations #26.296, 26.297, 26.298, 26.307, and 26.309.

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

¹³ *Guzinish*: The office for the assessment of religious standards for placement of students.

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* (unclean)¹⁴ and they are not “people of the Book [Qur'an].”¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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. This is because the authorities have barred the use of Tabriz and Sanandaj Bahá'í Cemeteries. Ghorveh Cemetery itself has also faced vandalism and destruction of its facilities. In several cases, where the authorities have taken over the burial process altogether, the families concerned were only informed of the location of their loved ones after the burials had already taken place. Since the Islamic Revolution, there have been constant attacks against Bahá'í cemeteries in different localities throughout Iran. Vandals have attacked Bahá'í cemeteries with total impunity, destroying graves and causing extensive damage.¹⁷

More recently, in April 2021, the authorities banned Bahá'ís from burying their loved ones on land previously allocated to them in Tehran's Khavaran Cemetery. This land, which was assigned to the Bahá'ís after the previous Bahá'í Cemetery of Tehran was confiscated and destroyed in 1981, has sufficient burial space for several more decades. However, agents from the Security Office of the Behesht-e Zahra Organization, which manages Khavaran, banned the community from using these plots. The only recourse available to the Bahá'ís was to bury their loved ones in the narrow gap between existing graves or to use a mass burial site known to be the burial place of thousands of political prisoners killed in the early years of the Islam revolution, including at least 50 Bahá'ís. However, the Bahá'ís refused to use this site, and, following international pressure, the authorities have for now reversed course and lifted their ban.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ In the early 1980s, the Mayor of Tehran, Mohammad Kazem Seifian, instructed cemetery directors to prohibit the burial of Bahá'ís in Muslim cemeteries. In one letter dated 12 December 1981, the mayor said, in part, “Many simpletons have been misled by this sect and many Muslims have wasted their time arguing with them [the Bahá'ís]. It [“Bahá'í sect”] is therefore, not an officially recognized religion and these individuals [i.e., the Bahá'ís] must be buried in the section of the cemetery that is allocated to those people who are not of the Book.”

<<https://iranbahai persecution.bic.org/archive/bahais-must-be-buried-part-cemetery-reserved-those-who-are-not-people-book>> In another letter dated 27 December 1982, the mayor said, “In view of the approval given by Sharia Judge Hojjat al-Eslam Mohammadi Gilani and to prevent contamination of the environment and to maintain cleanliness [purity], it is permissible to construct in the cemetery a facility where individuals who are not of the Book can be washed in the cemetery.” <<https://iranbahai persecution.bic.org/archive/permission-build-washing-area-cemetery>>.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ For more historical information, see the Bahá'í International Community's report *Situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran with respect to their cultural rights*, November 2016:

<<https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/srculturalrights-1116.pdf>>.

Below is a recent example of another threat to a Bahá'í Cemetery:

- In 1980, concurrent with the confiscation of other Bahá'í properties in Iran following the Islamic Revolution, the Bahá'í cemetery of Babolsar, which was in the name of the Bahá'í community, was confiscated by the *Mustaq'afán* Foundation.¹⁸ Since then, every possible legal channel has been used to return the cemetery back to the Bahá'ís. However, the *Mustaq'afán* Foundation sold it to an individual who sectioned off the property for sale, but the Aide Committee of the *Mustaq'afán* Foundation claimed half of the property and as a result there was some disagreement with the aforementioned individual and the property was sealed for a while. It now appears that the parties have recently come to a resolution to sell sections of the land. Nonetheless, the Bahá'ís have no recourse to reclaim this land.

V. Incitement to Hatred

In violation of third cycle UPR recommendations #26.167, 26.310, and 26.314.

The upsurge in human rights violations against the Bahá'ís in Iran since 2005 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.

The materials present a wide range of completely false allegations. Incitement to hatred against the Bahá'ís has long been a mainstay of campaigns by the government to promote religious orthodoxy. 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 as listed below.

Given the numerous methods that are used to disseminate information, it is difficult to provide the exact number of articles, videos, or web pages appearing in government-controlled or government-sponsored media featuring anti-Bahá'í propaganda. Nonetheless, in the last year we have documented at least **1,201** mentions of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in various media and at least **39,128** anti-Bahá'í propaganda social media posts, all with an estimated reach in the tens of millions of people. As these figures only represent a fraction of the material, what is certain is that 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. They include Aftab News, Basij News, Fars

¹⁸ *Mustaq'afán* Foundation: Foundation for the poor.

News, Ferghe News, Hawzah News, Iranian Quran News Agency (IQNA), QudsOnline, Rasa News, and Shabestan News.

Moreover, because Iranian Bahá'ís have long been denied access to all means of communication with the public, they cannot counter the lies and misinformation propagated about them and their religion, which, in many cases, come from those who give the Iranian people guidance in spiritual matters. When Bahá'ís have tried to contact newspapers and other media requesting right of reply, they have been ignored, or else mocked for having thought that they would be granted the means to deny published allegations or to present their own point of view. This refusal is in total contradiction with Article 5 of Iran's *Press Law*.¹⁹

On 26 March 2018, the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued, via his website,²⁰ a new religious decree (fatwa) concerning “association and dealing with Bahá'ís”. He stated that, “[y]ou should avoid any association and dealings with this perverse and misguided sect.” An English translation of the entire decree is included in Appendix 7 to this document.

¹⁹ Article 5: The press are lawfully permitted to acquire and disseminate domestic and foreign news aimed at enhancing public awareness by taking into consideration the best interests of the community and by observing the provisions of the existing law. *Press Law* (Ratified on 19 March 1986) And Its Executive By-law (31 January 1987) With amendments of 18 April 2000.

²⁰ <<http://www.leader.ir>>.

Appendix 1

Copy of court order for trial of Mr. Ahmad Kiani Ashtarjani, Ms. Helina Kiani Ashtarjani, and Ms. Mina Ramazani Teshnizi

«فلا تُبْعَثُوا كَثِيفًا أَنْ تَعْلَمُوا»

شماره دادنامه : 140009390002366980
تاریخ تنظیم : 1400/03/08
شماره پرونده : 9909983655600150
شماره بایگانی شعبه : 9902100

شعبه 102 دادگاه کیفری دو شهرستان فلاورجان (102 جزایی سابق)
دادنامه



دادگستری کل استان اصفهان

پرونده کلاسه 9909983655600150 شعبه 102 دادگاه کیفری دو شهرستان فلاورجان (102 جزایی سابق) تصمیم نهایی شماره 140009390002366980

متهمین:

1. آقای احمد کیانی اشترجانی فرزند علی محمد 2. خانم مینا رمضانی تشنیزی فرزند علیمراد 3. خانم هلنا کیانی اشترجانی فرزند احمد با وکالت خانم مریم کریم پور فرزند غلامعلی به نشانی استان اصفهان - شهرستان اصفهان - شهر اصفهان ارتش-کوچه سجادیه اول-مجتمع فردوس واحد 9

اتهام: تبلیغ علیه نظام جمهوری اسلامی

دادگاه با بررسی اوراق و محتویات پرونده ختم رسیدگی را اعلام و به شرح ذیل اقدام به صدور رای می نماید.

رای دادگاه

درخواست اتهام 1- خانم مینا رمضانی تشنیزی فرزند علیمراد ۳۹ ساله 2- احمد کیانی اشترجانی فرزند علی محمد ۴۹ ساله هر دو با وکالت خانم مریم کریم پور داور بر فعالیت تبلیغی علیه نظام از طریق انتشار مطالب فرقه ضاله بهائیت در فضای مجازی بدین توضیح که حسب گزارش اداره اطلاعات شهرستان فلاورجان متهمین به واسطه ارتباط با عناصر فرقه ضاله از تشیع روی گردان شده و به فرقه ضاله بهائیت گرایش یافته اند و اقدام به تبلیغ فرقه ضاله بهائیت در شبکه های مجازی می نمایند که دادگاه از توجه به جمیع دلایل، قرائن و امارات موجود در پرونده از جمله اقرار صریح متهمین به ارتباط دوستی با بهائیان و کشف جزوات و کتاب های اعتقادی مربوط به فرقه ضاله بهائیت در منزل متهمین، کیفرخواست صادر شده از دادسرای عمومی و انقلاب شهرستان فلاورجان، گزارش مورخ 1399/7/30 اداره اطلاعات شهرستان فلاورجان تحقیقات صورت گرفته توسط اداره اطلاعات دفاعیات غیر موثر وکیل متهمین در جلسات دادگاه با احراز قصد مجرم متهمین و علم آنها به موضوع جرم بزه منتسب به متهمین منطبق با بند ۲ ماده ۵۰۰ مکرر قانون الحاق دو ماده به کتاب پنجم قانون مجازات اسلامی (تعزیرات و مجازات های بازدارنده) مصوب 1399/11/15 (عنوان مجرمانه فعالیت آموزش و تبلیغی انحرافی مغایر یا مخل به شرع مقدس اسلام) تشخیص داده و مستندا به ماده مرقوم و مواد 140 و 144 و 164 و 215 قانون مجازات اسلامی مصوب 92/2/1 با اعمال مقررات ماده ۲۸ قانون مجازات اسلامی مصوب 1397/3/30 مورخ 99/12/25 هیئت وزیران هر کدام از متهمین را به پرداخت ۲۴۰ میلیون ریال جزای نقدی و محرومیت از حقوق اجتماعی به مدت هفت سال محکوم می نماید جزوات و کتاب های اعتقادی مربوط به فرقه ضاله بهائیت معدوم و سایر امور و مدارک به متهمین مسترد می گردد ضمنا در خصوص اتهام خانم هلنا کیانی فرزند احمد متولد ۱۳۹۲ با وکالت خانم مریم کریم پور داور بر فعالیت تبلیغی علیه نظام جمهوری اسلامی با توجه به اینکه نامبرده فاقد مسئولیت کیفری می باشد مستندا به مواد ۸۸۵ و ۱۴۶ قانون مجازات اسلامی مصوب ۱۳۹۲ و ۱۰ و ۳۴۰ قانون آیین دادرسی کیفری قرار منع تعقیب صادر و اعلام می گردد رای صادر شده حضوری و ظرف بیست روز قابل تجدید نظر استان اصفهان است.

دادرسی دادگاه انقلاب شهرستان فلاورجان - غلامحسین ابراهیمی

اعضای صادر کننده

تصویر برابر با اصل است.

نشانی: استان اصفهان - شهرستان فلاورجان - میدان نماز - خیابان ملاصدرا - ساختمان دادگستری

English translation



Court Order Number:	“Do not follow (your) base desires, lest you deviate”	
140009390002366980		
Date of Issuance:	Branch 102 of Criminal Court	Judiciary
8 Khurdád 1400 (29 May 2021)	of Twin Townships of	of Isfahan Province
File Number:	Falavarjan	
9909983655600150	(Former 102 Penal Court)	
Branch Archival Reference:		
9902100	Court Order	

Case reference 9909983655600150, Branch 102 of Criminal Court of Twin Townships of Falavarjan (Former 102 Penal Court)

Final decision number 140009390002366980

Accused:

1. Mr. Ahmad Kiani Ashtarjani, son of Ali-Mohammad; 2. Mina Ramazani Teshnizi, daughter of Ali-Morad; 3. Helina Kiani Ashtarjani, daughter of Ahmad – represented by *Mrs. Maryam Karimpour, daughter of ... [address]

Charge:

Propaganda against the regime of the Islamic Republic

Subsequent to reviewing the file records, the court concludes the hearing and issues a decision as follows.

Court Decision

This is concerning 1. Mina Ramazani Teshnizi, daughter of Ali-Morad, 39 years old, and 2. Ahmad Kiani Ashtarjani, son of Ali-Mohammad, 49 years old – represented by Mrs. Maryam Karimpour – pertaining to the charge of propaganda against the regime by way of publishing material related to the perverse Bahá’í sect in cyberspace. According to the report from the Intelligence Office of

Falavarjan, as a result of their association with the agents of the perverse Bahá'í sect, the accused turned away from Shia, leaned towards the perverse Bahá'í sect, and engaged in propaganda activities for the perverse Bahá'í sect in cyberspace. In light of all the evidence in the file, including circumstantial evidence, and including direct admission by the accused to friendship with Bahá'ís; the discovery of ideological books and materials pertaining to the perverse Bahá'í sect in the home of the accused; the indictment issued by the Public and Revolutionary Court of Falavarjan; the report of the Intelligence Office of Falavarjan dated 30 Mehr 1399 (22 October 2020); the investigations conducted by the Intelligence Office; the unsubstantiated defence submitted by the accused persons' legal representative in court; the obvious criminal intent of the accused and their knowledge of the crime associated with them, in light of item 2 of Recurrent Article 500, the addenda of two articles to Book Five of the Islamic Penal Code (*Tazirat* and deterrent punishments), ratified 15 Bahman 1399 (3 February 2021) (criminal title of training and propaganda activities against or disturbing to the sacred Sharia Islam), their crime is determined as such, and pursuant to Articles 140, 144, 150, 164 and 215 of the Islamic Penal Code, ratified 1 Ordibehesht 1392 (21 April 2013), and by applying Article 28 of the of the Islamic Penal Code, ratified [illegible], dated 25 Esfand 1399 (15 March 2021), of the Council of Ministers, each of the accused persons is obliged to pay a 240 million rial monetary fine and they will be deprived of their civil rights for a period of seven years. All ideological books and materials pertaining to the perverse Bahá'í sect will be destroyed and all other documents will be returned to the accused.

Moreover, in regard to the charge against Helina Kiani Ashtarjani, daughter of Ahmad, represented by Mrs. Maryam Karimpour, pertaining to propaganda activities against the regime of the Islamic Republic, considering that the said individual has no criminal record, pursuant to Articles 146 and 885 of the Islamic Penal Code, ratified 1392 (2013), and Articles 10 and 340 of the Criminal Code of Procedure, a writ of non-prosecution has been issued and announced.

This court order was issued in the presence of the accused and can be appealed within 20 days in the Province of Isfahan.

Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Falavarjan -- *Gholam Hosein Ebrahimi

Appendix 2

Provisional translation of the decree issued on the website of the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei concerning association and dealing with Bahá'ís

6 Farvardín 1397 [26 March 2018]

<http://www.leader.ir>

[Emblem] The Office of the Supreme Leader Website

New Enquiry (Farvardín [March/April])

[This website provides answers to various religious enquiries. The following question relates to Bahá'ís:

Association and dealing with Bahá'ís

Q. What is the judgment about association and dealings with a Bahá'í?

A. **You should avoid any association and dealings with this perverse and misguided sect.]**

