



MPs, Senators call for an end to persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran

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We write as Parliamentarians to make an urgent demand for the Islamic Republic of Iran to halt the recent escalation of its persecution of the Bahá'í religious minority. Under the cover of the coronavirus pandemic, Iranian authorities have targeted dozens of Bahá'ís for persecution, threatened to “uproot” the community, initiated new prison sentences, and extended a media campaign of hatred. This targeted persecution must stop.

Since the inception of the Bahá'í Faith in 1844, its followers have been persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and executed. They continue to face ongoing, state-sponsored persecution. The tactics of the Iranian government are intended to deprive Bahá'ís of their livelihood, destroy their cultural heritage and prevent their young people of obtaining a higher education. This strategy was outlined in a 1991 memorandum uncovered by the United Nations, which was signed by the highest authorities in Iran – including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

This persecution has been ramped up amid growing anti-Bahá'í propaganda spread in the news, a marked increase in court summons for Bahá'ís awaiting trial for their beliefs and an official threat to “uproot” the Bahá'í community in Shiraz.

Bahá'í prisoners of conscience have long faced unsanitary conditions in overpopulated prison cells, and the risks to their safety are further exacerbated by the current pandemic. As Canadians and members of a global community, it pains us to see our brothers and sisters languishing in prisons, facing falsified charges, with no legal recourse.

We join the international community in our plea to the Iranian authorities to order the release of all prisoners of conscience, as well as the end of the ongoing maneuvers of intimidation and repression levelled against the Bahá'í community.

Signed,

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