

BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

United Nations Office

Situation of the Baha'is in Iran – under item 4

Oral statement to the 15th session of the UN Human Rights Council
1 September 2010
Geneva

The seven people who used to tend to the religious needs of the Baha'i community in Iran, and administered its affairs, have been unjustly imprisoned for nearly two and a half years. Following their trial, they each received a sentence of 20 years imprisonment, recently reduced to 10.

We have already come before this Council to denounce all the ways in which the handling of their case has violated not only international human rights law, but also Iran's own Penal Code. After an excessively long period in solitary confinement, suffering ill-treatment under interrogation, these Baha'is were forced to tolerate harsh confinement in cells that are not supposed to be used for long-term imprisonment. None of Iran's regulations governing "temporary detention" were observed in this case. There was never any legal basis to refuse release on bail, awaiting trial.

Their trial took six months, from January to June. The judiciary repeatedly resisted all appeals for it to be held in open court, while violating the rules for closed hearings by allowing intelligence officials and their camera crews to be there and to film the proceedings.

In August, the judge informed (orally) a member of the prisoners' legal team about their sentence. Their attorneys have now filed an appeal. Meanwhile, the seven Baha'is have been transferred outside Tehran to yet another notorious prison: Raja'i Shahr.

Mr. President,

These people never acted against the State. They chose to stay in Iran despite all the hardships because their beliefs inspired them to serve their country and their fellow citizens. They are innocent of all the charges laid against them. The case against them is utterly without foundation. They have been subjected to a gross and flagrant miscarriage of justice, and we call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Their case is illustrative of the persecution that targets all members of this religion in Iran and others who think differently from those in authority.

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