



SCIENCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY

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To Whom It May Concern,

For a decade as chair of the Committee of Human Rights of the United States National Academies of Science, Medicine and Engineering, I learned of a wide range of violations of human rights in different parts of the world. Through letter-writing campaigns and personal visits, the committee advocated in support of colleagues subjected to serious human rights abuses worldwide.

The treatment of the Baha'is and their properties in Iran since the establishment of the current regime, including the recent land seizures of the Baha'is in the village of Ivel, has and continues to be one of the most vicious and unfair attacks on religious rights and freedom of expression. This situation is now widely recognized internationally and requires prompt joint action with participation from all concerned nations.

It is against civil laws and unacceptable to have the persistent and systematic pogroms against Baha'is, the largest religious minority in Iran, in view of their beliefs of accepting of all religions, including Islam and its Prophet, encouraging service to society, and prohibiting any form of violence in response to persecution.

The policy of preventing tens of thousands of young people, dedicated to serving their society and eager to develop their capabilities -- some of them with nationally top academic achievements -- from entering higher education is not only a crime against these youth but a sad disservice to the country whose advancement they are eager to contribute to. From a secular human rights perspective these policies clearly represent irrational and inhumane intolerance and are in contradiction to the ideals of all world religions.

The members of the ruling group in Iran presumably have regards for the opinions of impartial intellectuals and scholars of other countries and must realize that their treatment of the Baha'is puts them all in the role of being potential accomplices to crimes against humanity.

All concerned nations should consider the proposal of a U.N. Manifesto for the protection of Baha'is and their right to religious freedom.

Respectfully,

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