

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

12 January 1979

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

From reports in the news media you have no doubt learned of the disturbances in Iran. The followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have in the land of its birth once again been subjected to severe persecution and active repression.

The National Spiritual Assembly compiled during the month of October 1978 a list of 93 cases dealing with personal injuries inflicted upon individual believers and of damages to houses, shops, crops and livestock, as well as to local Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds. During the month of December organized mobs attacked Bahá'ís and their properties in Shiraz and its environs. As a result of these attacks over 300 homes were either burned or destroyed, and some 200 looted. In these events 15 believers were beaten or wounded, and two were killed. Fortunately the intention of the attackers to destroy the Holy House of the Báb was not carried out, but the spirit of aggressive animosity towards the Bahá'ís spread to several centers throughout the province of Fárs, including the town of Marvdasht, where 31 Bahá'í homes were looted and the imposing structure of the local Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds reared by that community was razed to the ground.

Following these events, the wave of persecution spread to the north of the country. In several towns and villages of Adhirbáyján, and particularly in Míyán-Duáb, the onslaught was severe. In the latter town the first target was the local Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, which was totally destroyed, and this was followed by the burning or looting of 80 homes and the brutal murder of two believers, a father and his son, whose bodies were then dragged through the streets, cut in pieces, and consigned to the flames.

The organized and violent assaults on Bahá'í lives and properties have emboldened and incited hooligans all over the country, and the oppressed Bahá'ís are constantly under threat of mass aggression and assault.

These acts of hostility against the Bahá'ís have so far cost four lives, millions of dollars in loss of property, and the displacement of some 700 individuals who have become homeless. The spirit of the Bahá'ís, however, is very high, and acts of heroism and magnanimity have been reported, which historians will record for posterity.

The National Spiritual Assembly of Iran has instituted a special fund for the relief of the needy and suffering from among the believers in that country. The House of Justice has already contributed a sum of \$135,000.00 to this fund, and it calls upon all friends in every land to offer of their substance, at this hour of need, to help their tormented brethren in the Cradle of the Faith. All contributions should preferably be sent to the Universal House of Justice, which will ensure that the contributions are transmitted safely to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran.

The House of Justice further calls on the friends the world over to join it in fervent prayers for the protection of the Faith and the Holy Places and for the relief and deliverance of the beloved and steadfast friends in Iran. It particularly invites the friends to pray daily during the period of the Fast, supplicating Bahá'u'lláh that the distressing plight of the Persian Community may be mitigated and that their sorrows and deprivations may be transmuted into comfort and joy through His grace and bounty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

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