

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

13 May 1984

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

On Thursday, 10 May 1984, the Universal House of Justice instructed the Bahá'í International Community in New York to issue the following press release and to keep the appropriate United Nations agencies informed of the continuing persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF IRAN HAS TAKEN AN EXTREMELY SEVERE AND CRITICAL TURN.

OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS ABDUCTIONS, EXECUTIONS, THE IMPRISONMENT OF HUNDREDS, DISMISSAL FROM JOBS, EXPULSION OF BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN FROM SCHOOLS, DESTRUCTION OF HOMES HAVE BEEN THE COMMON LOT OF THIS OPPRESSED COMMUNITY. NOW, HOWEVER, THE AUTHORITIES IN IRAN SEEM TO HAVE DECIDED TO SUBJECT PROMINENT BAHÁ'ÍS TO BARBARIC METHODS OF TORTURE TO EXTRACT FROM THEM CONFESSIONS TO THE FALSE CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST THEM.

TORTURE HAS BEEN USED ON BAHÁ'Í PRISONERS BEFORE, BUT HITHERTO THE PURPOSE HAS BEEN TO FORCE THEM TO RECAPITULATE THEIR FAITH OR REVEAL INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR FELLOW BELIEVERS. ALL BUT A FEW OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS REMAINED FIRM AND PREFERRED IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH TO RECAPITULATION OF THEIR FAITH. RECENTLY AN ADDED OBJECTIVE SEEMS TO INSPIRE THE GOVERNMENT'S TORTURE-MONGERS.

ALTHOUGH IN ALL THESE YEARS, SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN POSSESSION, THROUGH CONFISCATION, OF ALL THE RECORDS AND FILES OF THE ENTIRE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN IRAN, IT HAS FAILED TO PRODUCE A SINGLE SHRED OF EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ITS REITERATED ACCUSATION THAT THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY IN IRAN IS A NETWORK OF FOREIGN SPIES AND AGENTS. IT WOULD SEEM THAT NOW IT HAS DETERMINED TO MANUFACTURE BY MEANS OF FALSE CONFESSIONS EXTRACTED UNDER TORTURE, EVIDENCE TO ENABLE IT TO PUBLICLY JUSTIFY ITS INHUMAN PERSECUTION OF THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF IRAN. WE KNOW OF THREE BAHÁ'ÍS WHOSE WILLS HAVE BEEN BROKEN UNDER THIS BARBARIC TORTURE AND WHO HAVE SUBMITTED TO THE DEMANDS OF THE AUTHORITIES, MAKING STATEMENTS ADMITTING TO A SERIES OF CRIMES. DOUBTLESS THE AUTHORITIES HOPE TO PUBLISH SIMILAR "CONFESSIONS" IN THE DAYS TO COME, MADE BY OTHER HAPLESS VICTIMS OF THIS FLAGITIOUS TREATMENT.

WE KNOW THE NAMES OF MANY BAHÁ'ÍS WHO ARE NOW BEING TORTURED, AND ALTHOUGH, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, THESE CANNOT BE PUBLICIZED, THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO SOME INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS.

In addition to the above press release, supplementary information was telexed to the Bahá'í International Community and selected National Spiritual Assemblies:

FOLLOWING IS SOME DESCRIPTION TORTURES TO ENABLE YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS GIVE FURTHER BACKGROUND AS NECESSARY. THIS INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM RELIABLE SOURCES INCLUDING EYEWITNESSES.

REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS, USUALLY LATE AT NIGHT, WILL SUDDENLY CONVERGE UPON HOME BAHÁ'Í FAMILY. AFTER ENGAGING IN VARIETY VERBALLY AND PHYSICALLY ABUSIVE ACTIONS INVOLVING THREATS AND RANSACKING HOUSEHOLD IN GUISE OF CONDUCTING SEARCH, THEY SEIZE ALL BAHÁ'Í BOOKS AND PAPERS AND FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS AND TAKE AS PRISONER WHOMEVER THEY ARE INTERESTED IN APPREHENDING.

INTERROGATIONS OFTEN TAKE PLACE WHILE VICTIM SITS FACING WALL OR IS BLINDFOLDED SO THAT HE OR SHE MAY NOT IDENTIFY INTERROGATORS. USUALLY SUCH VICTIMS ARE CURSED, REVEILED, BEATEN AND SUBJECTED TO EXTREME PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES DURING COURSE THESE INTERROGATIONS.

THERE ARE INSTANCES OF PRISONERS BEING PLACED IN TOTAL SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN ISOLATED CELL 1.70 METERS BY 2 METERS AND HELD THERE FOR WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO SPEAK TO ANYONE WHATEVER, NOT EVEN PRISON GUARD.

IN OTHER INSTANCES BAHÁ'Í PRISONER, MAN OR WOMAN, WILL BE TIED FIRMLY TO SPECIALLY DESIGNED TABLE AND WHIPPED MERCILESSLY ON ALL PARTS BODY, BUT PARTICULARLY ON SOLES FEET. PERIODICALLY PRISONER WILL BE CHECKED AS TO WHETHER HIS WILL HAS BEEN BROKEN AND HE IS WILLING EMBRACE PURPOSES PRISON AUTHORITIES. AS LONG AS HE RESISTS, THIS PHYSICAL ASSAULT IS REPEATED MORNING AND EVENING, RESULTING IN SWELLING PRISONER'S LEGS ON WHICH HE IS COMPELLED TO WALK. PRISONER EXPERIENCES GREAT THIRST IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AND IS FORCED IN THIS CONDITION TO WALK UNAIDED TO SLAKE THIRST WITH GLASS WATER ALLURINGLY DISPLAYED SOME DISTANCE FROM HIM. INTERNAL BODILY INJURY ALSO RESULTS FROM SEVERE BEATINGS—INVARIABLY PRISONER PASSES BLOOD IN URINE. TO KEEP PRISONER ALIVE SOMETIMES DOCTOR WILL BE SUMMONED TO APPLY SUPERFICIAL TREATMENT.

IN CASES WHEN BOTH WIFE AND HUSBAND ARE PRISONERS, ONE WILL BE SHOWN DAMAGED BODY OF THE OTHER DURING COURSE OF INTERROGATION. CRIES AND MOANS OF TORTURED PRISONERS REVERBERATE THROUGH PRISON AND ARE HEARD BY INMATES WHOSE TURN WILL SOON COME.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Kindly share this information with the believers in your community, and use it as a basis for answering inquiries which you may receive from news media or government officials.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat