

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

13 December 1988

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

It is with heavy heart that the Universal House of Justice instructed us to inform you that two believers who had been imprisoned in Iran for some time, have recently been executed.

Mr. Bihnám Páshá'í, a resident of Simnán and member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of that city, had been arrested on 19 November 1983 in Tehran. In the summer of 1988 he was transferred to Evin prison and his family has not been permitted to see him since July 1988. The news of his execution was communicated to his family on 3 December 1988. He was 49 years old.

Mr. Páshá'í was from a Muslim family and accepted the Faith some years ago, the only member of his family to do so. It is assumed that this was the reason for his execution, for the authorities in Iran are known to be very severe on those who independently accept the Faith, considering them to be apostates according to Islamic law.

The other Bahá'í recently executed was Mr. Íraj Afshín. He was arrested late in 1986 and his family has not been allowed to see him since 17 July 1988. News of his execution was given to his family on 26 November 1988. He was 55 years old.

Mr. Afshín was a colonel in the Iranian Air Force, and the authorities maintain that his execution was on political grounds due to his connections with royalists, members of a group opposed to the Government. It is established, however, that Mr. Afshín had not engaged in political activities, that he firmly maintained his faith throughout his imprisonment, and that he was assigned to a prison ward where other Bahá'ís were kept.

To date, neither the exact charges, nor the dates of execution nor the places of burial are known for these two latest victims.

It was also reported that 36 Bahá'í prisoners had recently been in great danger of execution. They were housed in a prison ward together with many mujaheddin and communists. One night, when their fellow prisoners were rounded up for execution, the 36 Bahá'ís were also taken out with them, blindfolded and lined up to be shot. Among them were two very old Bahá'ís, Mr. Vafá'í of Isfahan and Mr. Mazlúmi of Sangsar. Casually, one of the guards asked these two men what they had done at their age to deserve being shot. They answered that they were Bahá'ís, whereupon their executioners said that they had no orders to shoot Bahá'ís. Fortunately, the other Bahá'ís overheard these remarks and all stepped forward identifying themselves as such and, in this way, they were spared...

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat