

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

8 April 1992

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

With sorrowful hearts we have received confirmation of the execution in Evin Prison in Tehran on 18 March 1992 of Mr. Bahman Samandari, member of a distinguished Bahá'í family who had been active in the affairs of the Bahá'í community. No reason for his execution has been given by the judicial or prison authorities, nor have they disclosed the location of his grave.

This tragic surprise is the more shocking for the fact that the whole matter has been shrouded in secrecy. The execution was kept quiet for more than two weeks; no advance information was given to the family; no subsequent announcement about it was made; the news of it was broken to Mr. Samandari's widow only when she attempted to visit him on 5 April, the date given her by the authorities after they had denied her permission to see him despite her several previous attempts since his arrest on 17 March. The manner of informing her of his death was to hand her her husband's will, which had been written on 18 March. No death certificate was issued, although inquiries by the Samandari family at the office of the Tehran general cemetery brought the response that the name of Bahman Samandari had been entered into its records.

No official charge or verdict was announced, assiduous inquiries by the family members producing only a vague indication that Mr. Samandari's execution had to do with his previous arrest four years ago when he and four other Bahá'ís were arrested for meeting in his home. At that time, 21 October 1987, charges were leveled against him because of his membership in the Bahá'í community. He and his fellow prisoners were released on 18 December 1987, after the title to Mr. Samandari's home had been turned over to the authorities along with a large sum of money as bail.

The timing and suddenness of the matter and the duplicity on the part of the authorities are also a cause of bafflement. Mr. Samandari was summoned by the authorities on 17 March ostensibly to receive a document from them. On 18 March, the date of his will which was handed to Mrs. Samandari by the Evin Prison authorities, he was killed. On 20 March he was buried. These events took place at the time of the approach of the long public holiday associated with the Iranian new year, an obviously inconvenient time for inquiries.

It is a source of outrage to the international Bahá'í community that after a cessation of executions of Bahá'ís for a period of three and a half years, such a brutal act could again be perpetrated against an innocent community. It belies the position publicly and repeatedly affirmed by the Iranian Government that Bahá'ís are not being persecuted for their religious beliefs.

As further details become known, they will be sent to you....

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]