

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

24 June 1992

To selected National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

As you are already aware from previous communications, the Bahá'í Holy Places and other properties and endowments belonging to the Bahá'í community of Iran are still under government control. Many have been desecrated or demolished and the sites used for constructing roads or other buildings.

Among these confiscated properties was the once beautiful and well-kept Bahá'í cemetery in Tehran. It has been desecrated and the headstones and marble coverings of the graves were removed and later sold in auctions. All identification marks on the graves were obliterated, and a school and playground are being built on this site.

The Bahá'í community had owned a large piece of property to the south of Tehran which was intended for use as the future cemetery of the Tehran Bahá'í community. This was also confiscated and all petitions to regain it have been fruitless. Instead, a small, barren piece of land without any public service or utilities was assigned to the Bahá'ís of Tehran by the Iranian Government for use as a burial site for their dead. However, neither headstones nor any identification of the individual graves are permitted on that site. A Bahá'í friend living in the United States, who visited Iran in October 1991, has described it as very depressing. The bodies of the dead have to be prepared for burial at home or water has to be fetched for that purpose from a Christian cemetery in the neighborhood....

It should be recalled that most of the Bahá'í cemeteries in Iran have been desecrated or demolished and that thousands of Bahá'ís who wish to visit these cemeteries in order to pray for their departed relatives are either denied access, or they return with grieved hearts after witnessing the deplorable condition of the graves of their loved ones. Moreover, many of the Bahá'í martyrs executed in prison have been buried in areas not even known to their relatives.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat