

## The Universal House of Justice

25 December 2007

To the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the Cradle of the Faith

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

For the past three decades you have weathered storms of persecution with the heartfelt conviction that such tribulations are, ultimately, “the precursors of that Era of blissful felicity which is to incarnate God’s ultimate purpose for all mankind”. Religious and government authorities, who have always been the instigators of the cruelty meted out to you and your forebears, continue to deny you your God-given rights. They prohibit you from responding to the calumnies they spread about you and your beliefs while maintaining a climate of intimidation that severely threatens those who would come to your aid. Throughout, the international community and your fellow Bahá'ís from around the world have come to your defence. But now, justice-seeking, fair-minded Iranians from every walk of life in your homeland and abroad have begun to raise their voices in your defence and, in growing numbers, want to know the truth about the Faith.

Across your nation, in cities and towns, from neighbourhoods, schools and university campuses, business establishments, government offices, and even from prison cells, more and more of your well-wishers are coming forward. School administrators, teachers, parents, and pupils have registered their outrage at the shameful treatment of young Bahá'í school children; friends and neighbours have refused to allow government officials illegal entry to Bahá'í homes; university students and faculty members have publicly and privately asserted their disapproval at the wrongful denial of access to higher education to Bahá'ís; civil servants have responded sympathetically to your efforts to secure your rights; journalists have displayed frustration at their inability to publish the truth of your case; and there are indications that enlightened clergy are willing to see your situation redressed.

Elsewhere in the world, where there is freedom to do so, Iranian intellectuals frequently express anger and dismay at your treatment; Iranian mass media recount your story and demand that the civil rights of all Iranians be safeguarded; countless numbers among the Iranian Diaspora sympathize with you, laud your courage, and seek to learn more about the principles that animate your lives.

To these are now being added Iranian organizations of civil society within and outside Iran, as well as a number of Iranian political parties. In this respect, in a recent development, certain political parties have publicly expressed concern over the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran, in one instance calling for the Bahá'í Faith to be officially recognized as a religious minority. The Bahá'í International Community, on behalf of the Bahá'ís worldwide, has formally conveyed appreciation to two such groups for their action.

These are fate-laden days. The storms of tests and trials continue, but however dark the clouds may be, they cannot dim the light appearing on the horizon. In response to such propitious developments, may you, with “fixed resolve and perfect confidence”, and avoiding involvement in partisan politics, seize every opportunity to join your fellow citizens in promoting ideals conducive to the prosperity of your cherished homeland, assured of our supplications at the Sacred Threshold that your noble endeavours may be richly confirmed.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]