

3 June 2008

To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith

Dearly loved Friends,

Nearly three weeks have passed since the arrest of the esteemed members of the Friends in Iran. No reliable information regarding their circumstances or their whereabouts has yet come to light. That they have been denied access both to their families and to legal counsel in order to defend their rights is deeply disturbing to Bahá'ís worldwide—indeed, to just and fair-minded people everywhere.

What brings solace to our hearts is the courage and steadfastness that you, the devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh, have manifested in the face of such crisis. With the utmost unity and in full adherence to the Divine teachings, placing complete reliance on heavenly confirmations, you continue to discharge your spiritual obligations and strive to protect and safeguard the interests of the Faith at all times. The support that the media have lent to the oppressed believers in Iran, the advocacy of their cause by social activists, and the sympathy voiced by Iranian intellectuals serve to revive our hope and evoke our profound gratitude.

Observe how an increasing number of Iranians, honouring their ancient traditions, recognize the imperatives of human rights. They believe that ignorant prejudices should cease to be the cause of discrimination and division among their fellow citizens and acknowledge that the true prosperity of their nation is to be attained through commitment to the principle of unity in diversity. You should rest assured that the Iranian people will exert their utmost to fulfil such a vision. How regrettable that a small band of individuals, whose hearts have been darkened by the clouds of prejudice and who have yielded to the forces of hatred and animosity, are incapable of comprehending the truth that Bahá'ís have no aim but to serve humanity and assist in the promotion of spiritual civilization. Thus do they accuse you of baseless conspiracies, persecute you for your beliefs and practices, and seek to harm you at every turn. And yet you remain ever mindful of the counsel of Bahá'u'lláh: “That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race.”

Strive, then, to exemplify the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It behooveth the loved ones of the Lord to be the signs and tokens of His universal mercy and the embodiments of His own excelling grace. Like the sun, let them cast their rays upon garden and rubbish heap alike, and even as clouds in spring, let them shed down their rain upon flower and thorn.” Undeterred by the current crisis and drawing inspiration from the Divine teachings, attach no importance to the acts of oppression and cruelty meted out to you. Indeed, respond in the opposite manner. Focus your thoughts on being a source of good to everyone who crosses your path. Make every effort to serve your fellow citizens—heirs to a rich and humane culture—who themselves suffer from many an injustice. Eschew divisiveness and conflict, consort with all people with kindness and sincerity, and engage your compatriots in discussions on matters that are of serious concern to them. May you convey to their hearts the hope, faith and confidence, already carried in yours, that the future of Iran is bright and the destiny of humankind glorious.

We will offer supplications in the Holy Shrines for the protection of the dearly loved believers in the Cradle of the Faith.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]