

9 February 2009

To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith

Dearly loved Friends,

In these turbulent days when the ocean of tribulation is surging and the tempest of iniquity has encompassed you on all sides, “not a moment passes that you are not called to mind, and at every instant you are in our thoughts.” The news of your constancy and steadfastness is a solace to our troubled hearts, and to witness the effects of the spiritual forces released through your sacrifices manifested in the accomplishments of your fellow believers throughout the world brings us immense joy.

Many among the people of Iran, including officials, are today convinced that your treatment is unmitigated injustice. The expressions of support and solidarity by your compatriots and the sense of sympathy and regret and the desire to make amends voiced by enlightened intellectuals, writers, journalists and artists are manifestations of the loftiness of ideal and the purity of spirit of the Iranian people. Their actions and sentiments are reminders of the noble deeds of their forebears who were in the vanguard of the defence of human rights in the ancient world. The fair-minded in that land question why such sincere and well-intentioned fellow citizens should be subjected to this cruel oppression. They wonder how it is that the Bahá'ís, whose religious teachings prohibit them from involvement in partisan politics, let alone acts of sedition—a truth vindicated by one hundred and sixty years of history—can be accused of being political agents of foreign powers. Indeed, so many in your country are astonished that a detailed and systematic plan would be devised, wide-ranging measures implemented, and considerable material and human resources expended, all in order to hamper the education and employment of a group of citizens and to bring about their impoverishment, promote prejudice, and foster mistrust. They ask why so much effort is exerted to propagate lies and calumnies and to distort the teachings and history of the Bahá'í Faith. They ponder in their hearts how their nation will answer for all these iniquities before God and humanity. It is as a consequence of such reflection that increasing numbers have become aware of the destructive effects of religious prejudice on efforts to build a progressive society and are determined to promote a culture founded on the high ideal of unity in diversity. You must not underestimate the historic significance of this shift in thought.

Remain confident that your steadfastness in the face of countless struggles and your sacrifices to advance the interests of your country will not be forgotten by your compatriots and will be rewarded by God. Strive, then, with constancy and steadfastness, with joy and radiance, to fulfil your spiritual obligations. In all matters extend support and encouragement to one another and spare no effort in strengthening the foundations of unity within your community. Persevere with sincerity and earnestness to secure your rights through recourse to the law, and deal with those who oppress you with loving kindness, with patience and forbearance, and counter their insults with words of peace and affection. Continue to strive in the arena of service to your homeland, and through your participation in constructive discourse with your neighbours, co-workers, friends and acquaintances, play a decisive role in society's progress. Thus will you behold the portals of Divine assistance wide open and witness the bestowals of God descend upon you in abundance.

We supplicate at the Sacred Threshold on your behalf.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]