

23 August 2022

To the sore-tried and faithful followers of the  
Beloved of the world in the Cradle of the Faith

Dear spiritual sisters and brothers, bearers of the Trust of God and protectors of the precious  
Cause of the Abhá Beauty,

Reports received from the sacred land of Iran attest the intensification of the unrelenting injustice and cruelty which, from the time of the appearance of the first effulgence of the Sun of Truth above the horizon of that land until the present day, have been endured by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in that country. The news tells of all types of discrimination and of assaults on the most basic civil rights of the Bahá'ís, including the arrests of innocent people and subjecting them to great pressures, attacks on the dignity and the private homes of Bahá'í citizens, the confiscation of their property and belongings and the destruction of their houses, the denial of higher education to Bahá'í youth, and even instances of individuals being prevented from earning a livelihood. Alas, a thousand times alas, that ignorant prejudices and ingrained malice have so possessed the hearts of some of those in authority that they have entirely abandoned truth and reality and, resorting to the use of force and relying on their ranks and positions, they have spread out an array of oppression and tyranny, of greed and avarice. Not only have they robbed the Bahá'ís in that land of their undisputed rights but—by spreading untruths and calumnies against the community to which no informed and fair-minded person any longer pays heed, and by making empty and unfounded accusations, not a single meaningless and self-contradictory word of which any sound mind takes seriously—they have also undermined and damaged their own reputation and credibility in the eyes of the public. What is there except prejudice, bigotry, malice, and enmity that can thus extinguish understanding and reason and motivate the advancement of claims so untenable and specious that they would fail to deceive even a child, let alone the astute and perceptive people of Iran? Deceit and slander on such a scale are a grievous sin, and these false and irrational claims are a grave insult to the understanding and intelligence of the inhabitants of Iran and a mockery in the face of all the people of the world.

In this regard, the recent events in Mázindarán, which are in fact the continuation of a persecution that the friends in that region have endured for many a long year, have been so odious and brazen this time that truly they not only deeply distressed the inhabitants of Iran, but they also offended the minds of the people of the world and made a profound impression upon public opinion the world over. Images of those homeless and afflicted ones awakened the conscience of thousands upon thousands of souls, and their groans and sighs brought on the lamentation of their compatriots. The broken hearts of those wronged ones weighed heavy on the heart of every conscientious person and filled it with pain and sorrow. The tears staining the cheeks of those innocent children also flowed from the eyes of countless viewers in the farthest reaches of the earth. This great injustice led to an unprecedented reaction in news media around the world within a very short time and resulted in unparalleled expressions of support from your noble countrymen, which were plainly evident online. The events of Mázindarán became a symbol of all the injustices that have been and continue to be perpetrated against the community of the Greatest Name throughout that country. Such support from other Iranians in defence of the trampled rights of that oppressed community is of immense importance. Perhaps for the younger generation, who have witnessed in the course of their lives an ever-increasing awareness on the part of their compatriots, this may not be as striking, but those who recall the conditions in years gone by and the dominant atmosphere of society in former times and who remember the widespread separation and lack of awareness—they view with wonder and astonishment the daily more pronounced awakening of the noble people of that land, a people whose culture has always respected human dignity and equality. They marvel at how, in so short a space of time, so

profound a change has become possible, and how, among a large number of Iranians, the true aims of the Bahá'ís and their affection for that sacred land have become known, their principles and beliefs have been better understood, and the nature of their endeavours in service to society and for the establishment of the oneness of the world of humanity, which is the foundation of all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, has become evident and clearly demonstrated.

O friends of the Beloved! Consider the recent events. Observe how in response to this manifest injustice, which can evoke rage and rebelliousness in a person, not a trace of vengeance is to be found in those pure hearts, those souls who have ever been immersed in the ocean of such tribulations. Rather, their attempts to obtain justice are through recourse to the law, and their appeals are made to those in authority. The Bahá'ís seek justice and long for fairness and equity, but never pursue retaliation and revenge. Their hearts are filled with pain, but wholly free of hatred and rancour. They are anxious, but their kindness and love are boundless. They have straitened means, but magnanimous characters and lofty aims. They are driven out of their homes, but are a shelter and refuge to others. They are caught in the snares of the malicious, but their spirits soar aloft. They are wronged, but are the well-wishers of those that wrong them. They raise their children not to engage in violence and conflict, but to show forth kindness and forgiveness, so that they may not harm an ant, much less a man. Those wronged ones console their burning hearts through faith in the Ancient Beauty and through the counsels of Him Who, by the hand of His own power, reared and nurtured their spiritual forebears in those regions. He forbade conflict and contention and taught them in words such as these: "The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity."

Of the friends in Iran, trained by the hand of the Lord Himself, no less can be expected. But know truly that in this turbulent world of afflictions, in which the people are weary of violence and abhor it, especially when carried out in the name of religion—in such a world, were a person to observe with a pure eye unclouded by prejudice, the conduct and example of the Bahá'í community in Iran would be sufficient evidence and abiding proof of Bahá'u'lláh's miracle and of the immense power of His sacred Cause to unify and promote peace. Through your adherence to His teachings and your behaviour and conduct, you have proven the practicability of the construction of a diverse and unified, ever-advancing and dynamic society and have demonstrated the reality of the effulgence of spiritual qualities and virtues in the world of humanity. Well done, a thousand times well done! This is the true meaning of the religion of God. This is eternal distinction and everlasting honour. Do not underestimate this great bounty and have no doubt regarding the exalted rank of those who are the true promoters of peace and reconciliation, nor regarding the lofty station of the sincere lovers of the world of humanity.

By the same token, it is befitting of the historic transformation that has taken place in the minds of so many of the people of Iran that you who tread the path of God should focus your efforts and your energies on the vital task of ever more greatly exemplifying the divine counsels in this radiant age. You strive to strengthen spiritual bonds within your communities and to increase unity, harmony, and solidarity. You encourage, assist, and appreciate each other in all your services and do not allow the profound unity of your community or the heartfelt connections among all its members to be susceptible to the least weakening, however brief. Beloved friends! In the midst of these events, bring hope to your countrymen's hearts. Be a source of consolation to every burdened soul and of confidence to every weary heart. Care sincerely for everyone and bring solace to every helpless one. Heal the pains of others and thereby ease your own pain. And before Almighty God ask forgiveness for those who commit iniquity against you, and pray fervently that the dross of prejudice and ignorance may be cleansed from their hearts.

Throughout the world your sisters and brothers, who pride themselves in their spiritual bonds of kinship with such heroic souls, constantly call you to mind in their daily and special prayers

and beseech the divine Throne that the countless instances of prejudice, persecution, and discrimination that you face may cease. Bahá'í communities the world over are exerting great effort to inform their governments and to awaken their peoples to what you have suffered and are still enduring. We, too, remember you at every turn and pray ardently on your behalf at His Threshold.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]