

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

September 30, 2015

To the American Bahá'í community

Dearest Bahá'í Friends,

The Iranian regime's relentless persecution of Bahá'ís—denying them any opportunity for higher education and pursuing with obsessive zeal the dismantling of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE)—shows no signs of abating. At this writing, some 74 Bahá'ís remain incarcerated, including the seven members of the former Yarán and six BIHE educators. To aid our efforts to defend these and other innocent believers whose right to practice their Faith is being systematically denied, we are, through our Office of Public Affairs, compiling a new database of Bahá'ís—for the 2015–16 academic year—who are in some way affiliated with colleges and universities in the United States.

With the tremendous turnover of undergraduate and graduate students every academic year, it would be impractical to conduct a partial survey, targeting only those students and faculty whose status has changed since their responding to previous appeals. We therefore ask all those friends who are college or university students, faculty members, administrators, or alumni currently involved with an institution of higher learning—as well as those employed by or affiliated with an educational association or agency—to add their names and contact information to this new database by completing, as soon as possible, the questionnaire available through the link <http://universities.bahai.us>.

Your swift and wholehearted response to previous appeals has greatly reinforced our efforts to defend Iran's Bahá'ís. The widespread publicity noted in our July message to the Feast of Kamál was driven by events on college campuses during the 2014–15 academic year. Similar opportunities will assuredly arise through *Not a Crime*—which, earlier known as *Paint the Change*, is the new name of the next phase of the *Education Is Not a Crime* campaign and is drawing on its past experiences to create a compelling movement employing the power of public art to increase awareness of local, national, and international issues and concerns. Just this month, *Not a Crime* garnered both [written](#) and [video](#) coverage from the Associated Press and the over two dozen media outlets that reposted the AP story. Once compiled, this year's database will provide us with an effective means for marshaling further support.

Your assistance in providing this information is deeply appreciated. We join you in ardent prayers to the Blessed Beauty that our efforts to bring the world's attention to the injustices and indignities being courageously borne by His valiant loved ones in the birthplace of our Faith may hasten the day of their freedom.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary