

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

May 2, 2016

To the American Bahá'í community

Dearly loved Friends,

On May 14, the five men and two women that once comprised the unofficial Iranian Bahá'í leadership group known as the Yárán will mark the completion of eight long years of imprisonment—difficult years that represent less than half of the manifestly unjust 20-year sentences they received. Though their sentences have each reportedly been reduced to 10 years pursuant to changes in the Iranian penal code, their incarceration continues as one more facet of a ceaseless campaign of harassment, deprivations, and violent attacks the Bahá'ís of Iran have been forced to endure for well over three decades, a campaign of hate and repression unashamedly sponsored by the Iranian regime.

As a response to this sad anniversary, we are asking Bahá'ís across the country to join in a congressional “call-in” centering on a resolution condemning the persecution that is now pending in the United States House of Representatives as House Resolution [220](#) (H.Res.[220](#)). Our aim in raising this call is to ensure that House Resolution 220 passes with the same strong bipartisan support its companion resolution in the Senate received last December.

We encourage you to telephone your congressional representatives and invite them to show their support by cosponsoring this resolution if they have not already done so. Individual Bahá'ís can enlist the support of family, friends, and neighbors in making these calls; Spiritual Assemblies can call on their contacts in the larger community to participate, including interfaith groups and other like-minded organizations.

Please make every effort to place a call to your representative's Washington office on Friday, May 13, as a large volume of calls received on one day will increase their impact. As this is a telephone campaign, do not send requests in writing, via email or otherwise. Further, do not attempt to engage your representative's office staff in conversation beyond a simple request for cosponsoring the resolution. Each call should take only a few minutes.

For further information on the persecution of Iran's Bahá'ís, we suggest you visit our Office of Public Affairs' website (at <http://publicaffairs.bahai.us>). Please also review the detailed instructions for the May 13 call-in campaign available on the website (at <http://publicaffairs.bahai.us/get-involved>). (This is a public page that does not require a log-in and can be shared with others.) As a convenience, the instructions have also been enclosed with this letter. Questions should be directed to Public Affairs either by phone (at 202.833.8990) or by email (at BahaisUS@usbnc.org).

Friends, let us pay tribute to the remarkable faithfulness and courage of Iran's Bahá'ís—deprived of all opportunity to share Bahá'u'lláh's unifying teachings in the very land of His birth—by making a special effort during May to intensify our own teaching efforts. Perhaps arranging a devotional gathering during the month, to give but one example, would be an appropriate way to honor the Yárán and all the prisoners of conscience in that country.

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536 Sheridan Road • Wilmette, IL 60091-2849

On the May 13 congressional call-in

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Your willingness, time and again, to come to the defense of our beloved sisters and brothers in Faith awakens our deepest admiration and gratitude and no doubt evokes similar emotions in the hearts of the Yárán and other Bahá'í prisoners. Your unflagging support—amplified by the support of members of Congress—sends a clear message to the Iranian government that its actions are being closely observed by the international community and people of good will everywhere and that its deplorable treatment of its Bahá'í minority will simply not be countenanced.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kenneth E. Bowers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary

Enclosure