

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

August 11, 2017

To all Local Spiritual Assemblies  
and registered Bahá'í groups

Dearest Bahá'í Friends,

The Iranian regime's persecution of Bahá'ís continues unabated. Daily forced to endure numerous indignities, they are denied even the most basic human rights—including access to college-level study. For most, the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) remains the only option for furthering their education. Meanwhile, the regime continues its unrelenting efforts to dismantle it, and some 93 Bahá'ís remain behind bars, among them the seven members of the former Yárán and six BIHE educators.

Yet the regime's treatment of Bahá'ís might have been far worse had the support of Bahá'ís everywhere—and the growing concern of fair-minded Iranians—not been a mitigating force, bringing this deplorable situation to the attention of the world and awakening an outrage voiced by Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike in every country where religious freedom is protected.

The campus communities at colleges and universities across the United States have responded sympathetically to presentations of the injustices being meted out to Iran's Bahá'ís. For this reason, we again request your assistance. To ensure we have up-to-date contact information for this segment of the population, we have today circulated a letter requesting that all the friends affiliated in some way with colleges and universities add their names to the database we are compiling for the 2017–18 academic year. A copy of the letter is attached.

Whether at an upcoming Feast or through other means, we ask that you promptly bring this request to the attention of 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—urging them to add their names and contact information to this updated database by completing, as soon as possible, the questionnaire available through the link [Educational Database](#), *even if they completed the survey in a prior year.*

Having ready access to an up-to-date compilation of such contact information has, in past years, greatly facilitated our efforts to defend the Iranian friends. For instance, when the *Not a Crime* campaign made the film *To Light Candle* available, Bahá'ís at many colleges and universities responded by arranging well-attended campus screenings—adding significantly to public awareness and often gaining media coverage. Additional films will soon be similarly made available and will be the subject of future communications. During this year of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, such a database will further be useful for communications about special opportunities connected with this unique moment in our history. Once compiled, the new database will provide us with an effective means for the further marshaling of support.

Our confidence remains high that our unity of purpose—confirmed by the King of Glory—will eventually overcome every last vestige of enmity and restore to our sisters and brothers in Iran their perfect right to practice their beliefs. We join you in prayers for that blessed day.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



Kenneth E. Bowers  
Secretary

Attachment