

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

August 11, 2017

To the American Bahá'í community

Dearest Bahá'í Friends,

Nearly two decades into the 21st century, the Bahá'ís of Iran continue to be targeted by the current Iranian regime for relentless harassment, deprivations, and oppression. This takes many forms—from arrests, arraignment on false charges, and incarceration to the desecration of Bahá'í cemeteries, government-ordered closure of Bahá'í-owned businesses, denial of access to higher education to qualified Bahá'í students, and the forced dismantling of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE).

Approximately 93 Bahá'ís are presently behind bars, including the seven members of the former Yárán and six BIHE educators. To aid our continuing efforts to defend these and other innocent believers whose legitimate right to practice their Faith, earn a living, and further their education is being systematically denied, we are, once again, through our Office of Public Affairs, updating, for the 2017–18 academic year, a database of Bahá'ís who are in some way connected with colleges and universities in the United States.

We 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 your names and contact information to this updated database by completing, as soon as possible, the questionnaire available through the link [Educational Database](#), *even if you 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 our Iranian sisters and brothers. 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 200th 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.

Your assistance in providing this information is deeply appreciated. We join you in ardent prayers to the Blessed Beauty that our continuing 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