

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

July 14, 2020

To the American Bahá'í community

Dearest Bahá'í Friends,

In March of this year, responding to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Iranian government reportedly released on furlough tens of thousands of its prisoners. To many imprisoned because of their religion, however, this did not apply. While some 20 Bahá'ís were released on furlough in March, at least 11 were summoned back to prison in May. And in the last several weeks, the regime has accelerated at least 60 long-pending criminal prosecutions of Bahá'ís. Concerns about the human cost of the pandemic have thus had little effect on the persecution our Iranian sisters and brothers in Faith continue to suffer.

In response, we are asking Bahá'ís across the United States to join in a congressional “call-in day,” centering on resolutions now pending in both houses of Congress condemning this persecution. The resolutions are:

- House Resolution 823 (or H.Res.823) in the House of Representatives
- Senate Resolution 578 (or S.Res.578) in the Senate

Such resolutions have in the past enjoyed bipartisan support in both houses of Congress and we believe these will similarly garner broad support. We strongly encourage you to phone your congressional representative and both senators, asking them to support Iran's Bahá'ís by cosponsoring House Resolution 823 or Senate Resolution 578, if they have not already done so. Individual Bahá'ís may enlist the aid of family, friends, and neighbors in making these calls. Local Spiritual Assemblies may call on their contacts in the larger community, including interfaith groups and other like-minded organizations.

Please make every effort to call your representative's and senators' Washington offices on Tuesday, July 28, 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, whether by email or otherwise. Further, do not attempt to engage your representative's or senators' office staffs in conversation beyond a simple request for cosponsoring the resolutions. Each call should take only a few minutes. Phone numbers for Washington offices are easily found through an Internet search.

Your willingness, time and again, to arise in defense of Iran's Bahá'ís is a source of great strength and hopefulness to our beloved coreligionists. We feel certain this effort will help secure the passage of these resolutions, making it clear to the Iranian regime that its current abuses, including the detention of innocent individuals during a pandemic, are condemned by both houses of the US Congress as a particularly egregious violation of religious freedom and proof enough of its contempt for its Bahá'í citizenry.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary