



February 19, 2009

## United Republicans of Iran

### Violation of the rights of the Baha'i citizens is shameful

## Call for an immediate release of the leaders of the Baha'i community in Iran

Nearly 9 months after the arrest of the 7 leaders of the Baha'i community in Iran and following the "guilty verdict" on espionage issued by Security Prosecutor of Tehran and even before a court of justice could review the accusations, the Prosecutor General of Iran in a letter to the Ministry of Intelligence, declared the activities of the leadership illegal and banned. The prosecutor general also stated: "that the activities of Baha'i organization in all aspect are illegal since their connection to Israel and opposition to Islam and Islamic nation and danger to national security is obvious. It is imperative that any further activities by any such groups be dealt with."

Head of the Ministry of Intelligence, Mr. Dori Najaf Abadi, while pointing to the 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> articles of the Constitution which stipulates the rights of the citizens and freedom of belief and speech, he himself violated these very same articles accusing them for their belief in another religion, and "tampering with minds of others and agitation."

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, arrest and intimidation of the Bahai's have always existed. But this is the first time that the government has openly and officially declared any religious activities by the followers of the Baha'i faith illegal and "equal to opposition to Islam and Islamic government" and for the benefit of the State of Israel.

The Islamic Republic of Iran in the last year has arrested numerous Bahai's throughout the country. According to published reports by Human Rights organizations, currently there are over 30 who are in prison. Among them are the 7 leaders of the Baha'i Community, **Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naemi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Ms. Mahvash Sabet, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli** and **Mr. Vahid Tizfahm** who were arrested last year. With the exception of Ms. Sabet who was arrested in Mashhad on March 5, 2008 the rest were arrested in Tehran on 14th of May.

The new cycle of arrest, torture and trial of the Bahai's under the pretext of espionage, indicates the escalation of intimidation against the believers of this faith.

False accusation of espionage for Israel is solely based on the ground that their religious center is located there and it's a pretext to conjure up inhumane and discriminatory policies against them.

United Republicans of Iran, which has consistently defended the rights of the Baha'i community in Iran, once again calls for their immediate release and to end the systematic pressure and restrictions against them and relieve the official orders of the prosecutor general and to accept their right to follow their beliefs.

The United Republicans of Iran, demand for the immediate elimination of any discrimination imposed on our compatriots based on gender, religion, ethnicity, race and creed.

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[international@jomhuri.com](mailto:international@jomhuri.com)