

Press Release 3-9-09

Scholars and Specialists in the Fields of Iranian and Middle East Studies Issue Statement against the Persecution of Baha'is in Iran

A prominent group of more than sixty professors and scholars who specialize in Middle Eastern and Iranian Studies have added their voices in protest over the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran and have asked the Iranian government to accord its Baha'is citizens their full civil rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international covenants on civil, social, and economic rights to which Iran is a signatory. In recent months, the situation of members of the Baha'i community, the largest religious minority in Iran, has worsened considerably. The statement makes reference to a number of forms of persecution and discrimination to which members of the Baha'i community of Iran have been and are being subjected. These include arbitrary arrests, attacks on individual Baha'is and their homes, economic discrimination, denial of access to higher education, and destruction of Baha'i cemeteries.

Those who have signed the statement include eminent scholars of Iran and the Middle East from prestigious academic and scholarly institutions in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Also among the signatories are several current and former presidents of major professional associations in the field, including the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and the International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS).

This statement adds further weight to many other prominent intellectuals, writers, artists, journalists, attorneys, and jurists from Europe, Asia, and North America, who have recently protested against the persecution of Baha'is in Iran.