



30 July

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA

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Cc: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

Dear Minister Payne,

RE: increasing propaganda raises serious concerns for the human rights of Baha'is in Iran

Following the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, members of the Bahá'í Faith - the largest religious minority in the country - have been subjected to a relentless campaign of systematic persecution. This persecution has impacted the lives of generations, from young infants to the elderly.

Yet in recent months, the four-decades long state-sponsored campaign of hate speech and propaganda has reached new levels, increasing in both sophistication and scale. This has provoked fresh concerns for the rights of the Baha'is in Iran.

The Baha'i International Community has been tracking anti-Baha'i propaganda in Iran over the decades and has, in recent months, witnessed an expansion in the machinery of hateful propaganda targeting the Baha'is.¹ The unfolding strategy to demonize the Baha'i community is reflected in a growing and coordinated network of hundreds of websites, Instagram accounts, Telegram channels and Clubhouse rooms, with the goal of demonising the Baha'is and to try to provoke public hatred for the community, thus justifying crimes against them.

This strategy by Iranian authorities became evident earlier this year, when an official Iranian directive was made public, which instructs local authorities in the city of Sari, in the northern province of Mazandaran, to "conduct strict controls" on the Baha'is in the city by "monitoring their operations", and introduce measures to "identify Baha'i students" in order to "bring them into Islam".²

Given the prevailing climate of systematic impunity in Iran, Amnesty International Australia joins with the Australian Baha'i Community in calling on the Australian Government to ask that Iranian authorities ensure:

¹ <https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/inciting-hatred-irans-media-campaign-demonize-bahais>

² <https://www.bic.org/news/exposed-sinister-plan-iranian-authorities-monitor-and-suppress-bahais>



- Baha'is are not subjected to hatred and discrimination as a result of disinformation about their beliefs. That authorities cease to promote false information about the
- Baha'is and ensure that the Iranian public has access to accurate information about the Baha'i Faith. Baha'is must be granted the right to reply privately and publicly to the accusations made against them and the beliefs they hold
- No Baha'i is criminalised and imprisoned on the basis of their belief and practice
- Baha'is are granted full access to university and are able to complete their degrees with the same rights as their fellow Iranians, without being subjected to expulsion or a systematic pattern of exclusion
- Baha'is are granted the right to earn a livelihood in the private sector and that their shops and businesses are not subject to closures and attacks

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Ry Atkinson at ry.atkinson@amnesty.org.au or 0423 270 124.

Yours sincerely,

Tim O'Connor

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