

OPEN LETTER

As philosophers, theologians, and scholars of religion, living throughout the world, we are raising our voices in protest against the recent attack by Iranian authorities on the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE).

As people of faith, we affirm that human beings are fundamentally spiritual in nature, created with the innate capacity to know God and investigate truth for themselves. To acquire knowledge and learning is the sacred and legal right of all; indeed, the state is obliged to provide it. In Iran, the government has done the opposite. Among the numerous violations of the human rights of Bahá'ís, their access to higher education is systematically blocked for no other reason than their beliefs. In order to cater to the needs of their youth, Iranian Bahá'ís developed the BIHE – their own, informal, community education initiative. On 22 May, 39 homes associated with the BIHE were raided. The Institute's activities have since been declared “illegal.” Nine educators remain incarcerated.

Attacks such as these, against the rights of citizens to organize and be educated in freedom, can no longer be tolerated. We call upon the Iranian government not only to cease its persecution of Bahá'ís, but to provide, and promote, education for all.

Signed by:

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