

Trial of Iran's seven Baha'i leaders

Oral statement to the Fourteenth Session of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, 8 June 2010

<http://news.bahai.org/human-rights/iran/yaran-special-report/un-statements/bic7>

Over 35 Baha'is are in Iranian prisons today. Since 2005: over 300 arrests. Arson and other violent attacks against Baha'is have increased in parallel with widespread incitement to hatred. Baha'i children are intimidated and harassed by teachers and school officials, and Baha'i students denied access to university. The government applies many restrictions on employment, including a list of 25 trades from which Baha'is are banned, and denies their right to pensions and inheritance.

Unfortunately, these violations are ongoing and well-known. Less well-known is the fact that Baha'is are incarcerated for years in pre-trial detention facilities, under very harsh conditions.

This is the case for the seven Baha'i leaders who have been in section 209 of Evin prison for over two years, forced to live under intolerable conditions. The next session of their trial will take place on 12 June, but release on bail is still denied. Their cells are so small, they can hardly move around; they have no fresh air or natural light, no furniture and no bedding. Contact with their loved ones is limited to ten minutes per week. Of course, these conditions have affected their health.

Three young Baha'is in Shiraz, tried and unjustly sentenced in 2007, are still now imprisoned under harsh, pre-trial conditions in a detention centre. Here, too, there is no furniture in the cells; prisoners must sit and sleep on the floor. They have all developed chronic back pain as a result. The two women are held together, but the young man is imprisoned alone and blindfolded every time he leaves his cell.

All the Iranian Baha'is suffer from human rights violations solely on religious grounds. And it is common knowledge that all those who hold differing opinions or beliefs are treated this way in Iran.