

**BAHÁ'Í
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY**

United Nations Office
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120, New York, NY 10017 USA
Telephone: 212-803-2500, Fax: 212-803-2566, Email: uno-nyc@bic.org

15 February 2009

To Iranian intellectuals, scholars, writers, journalists, activists and artists throughout the world

Respected friends,

Recently a group amongst you, promoters of justice, champions of freedom, and advocates of progress have, by means of an open letter, expressed your outrage at the injustice meted out to the Bahá'ís of Iran, and have raised your voices in defence of the inalienable rights of every Iranian. This initiative, born of insight and vision, is a manifestation of your loftiness of ideal and purity of spirit. It is, too, reminiscent of the laudable deeds of your forebears who were in the vanguard of upholding human rights in the ancient world. We are confident that many of your noble compatriots within Iran are of one mind with you and long for the chance to openly express the sentiments they hold in their hearts.

As you well know, for 165 years some among the religious and political leadership in Iran have sanctioned and vigorously supported systematic and relentless action to accomplish their aim to eradicate the Bahá'í community in that land, an objective that is today being pursued with ever increasing intensity. Given the obvious limitations of recourse to Iran's legal framework in defending their rights, Bahá'ís also appeal to the international community. They require, as well, courageous and high-minded individuals to come to their aid. Yet throughout the decades one major strategy deployed against them by the authorities was to create a social and intellectual milieu that would intimidate those fair-minded and informed individuals who had always wished to speak up in their support from doing so. It is in this connection that the issuing of the open letter assumes particular significance as an effort both to reject this milieu and the prejudice and estrangement it fosters, in favour of unity and oneness. Your action will serve, also, as a source of encouragement to others to follow in the trail you have blazed.

At a time when the seven-member leadership of the Bahá'í community in Iran stands accused without a shred of justification, the affirmations contained in your statement are especially poignant. We wish you to know that these have brought a degree of solace and relief to the aching hearts of your Bahá'í fellow citizens. On their behalf and that of the Bahá'ís throughout the world we convey our profound gratitude and appreciation for a deed of such historical moment. The ardent hope of Iranian Bahá'ís is to be able to labour, shoulder to shoulder, with their compatriots for the progress and exaltation of their country that it may assume its seat of honour and glory among the family of nations.

Respectfully, Bani Dugal

Principal Representative,
Bahá'í International Community – New York