

[TRANSCRIPT OF ORIGINAL NEWS ARTICLE IN ENGLISH]

[Newspaper:] The Swazi News

[Date:] Saturday, 24 July 1993

Baha'i followers persecuted

The Baha'is of Swaziland have received the sad news of the destruction of the Baha'i Cemetery in Teheran, Iran. Despite the rapid expansion of the Baha'i Faith all over the world, according to the Encyclopedia Britanica only second to Christianity, the followers of this Faith have been harassed, persecuted and killed since its birth in 1844 in Iran.

Baha'i Faith is a faith of love, peace and unity and its followers have proved over the years to be peace-loving, non-violent and law-abiding citizens where-ever they live.

However, both under the Shah and the present regime they have been deprived of basic human rights and treated as infidels and apostates. This wave of persecution has been intensified since the Islamic revolution of 1979 under the regime of the mullahs (Muslim Clergy).

The 500,000-strong Baha'i Community of Iran, mostly highly educated professionals have not been granted any right whatsoever in the new constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

All the employed Baha'is whether in public or private sectors have been dismissed from their jobs, their properties confiscated, and the pensioners have been forced to pay back whatever they had earned during their time of service and deprived of further retirement allowances despite their old age.

Their holy places have been demolished and desecrated. Baha'i students have been expelled from schools and universities and deprived of any education. This is at a time when the governments of the world are fighting illiteracy and trying by all means to improve the lots of their people.

Baha'i health institutions which served all the people irrespective of their race or persuasion have been destroyed and the equipment removed and this is at a time when World Health Organization (WHO) is trying to make health services affordable to all by the year 2000. More than 700 Baha'is have been imprisoned and over 250 people have been executed for their faith.

The International Community, the governments and the people of goodwill every-where have repeatedly condemned this inhuman and barbaric act against innocent people, but the Islamic government of Iran has systematically continued to eliminate the Baha'is from their midst.

The Baha'i Administrative Institutions in Iran have been dissolved, their holy writings and books confiscated and the believers have been denied the right to worship.

All these have not satisfied their fanatical feelings and not extinguished the fire of their hatred towards the Baha'is.

Recently, frustrated by the firmness and steadfastness of the Baha'is in their faith, they have started assaulting their dead and destroying their graves.

The Baha'i cemetery in Teheran was one of the most beautiful places. In order to boost the international image of Iran abroad, during the time of the Shah, when Queen Elizabeth II visited Iran, they took her for a guided tour to this place to show her its beauty and to a Baha'i hospital to demonstrate the type of medical service rendered to Iranians.

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