

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

[Emblem]

National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iran

Number: 1998

Date: 8 Rahmat 103 B.E

Corresponding to: 10 Tir 1325 [1 July 1946]

The Honourable Ashraf, Mr. Qavam os-Saltaneh, Prime Minister, continued [be] his Glory,

With respect, we wish to submit that, as you are aware, on 17 Mordad 1323 [8 August 1944], a group of influential local villains, instigated by Sheikh Abdollah Shahroudi, martyred three Baha'is of Shahroud in a most brutal and tragic manner and looted seventeen Baha'i homes and businesses, setting them on fire. After two years of pursuit of the matter, the victimized survivors of the martyrs transferred the case of this terrifying tragedy, in a spirit of great hope and confidence, to the Ministry of Justice, the respected judicial authorities and the criminal court, for investigation and compensation to the oppressed and the persecuted. In doing so, their aim was not to seek revenge or satisfy their thirst for vengeance by any means, but for the establishment of social justice and the prescribed law of retribution, and as a disciplinary measure for the aggressors who had violated the rights of others, so that they would realize the vigour of the government and determination of the state subsidiaries in the establishment of justice, and so that they would never again dye their hands with the blood of the innocent and would not bring disgrace and shame to our beloved land of Iran and its noble people, and in the eyes of other nations of the world.

Unfortunately, the instigators and the villains, including Khalesizadeh, both before and during the trial proceedings, in a show of disregard for order, continued their discord and sedition; they circulated pamphlets and declarations, terrorized and intimidated the court, and continued with all in their power to manipulate the general opinion, causing chaos and disorder, inciting the court audience against the Baha'is and their defence lawyers, showing disrespect and uttering profanity to their religious sanctities. Certain newspapers, including Vejdan, instigated by the same hostile and ill-wishing group, under the title "Extracts from the Shahroud Dossier", published baseless and unfounded articles, and levelled false accusations against the Baha'is, with the intention to mislead the frivolous.

You have, no doubt, been briefed on and are quite familiar with the behaviour and conduct of these people. The defence attorney representing the persecuted and the survivors of the martyrs, under the pressure of insult, intrigue, intimidation and impending danger to his life, even during the court proceedings, submitted his statement of defence and excused himself from appearing in future court proceedings. As a result, in spite of the fact that the case of murder and looting was unequivocally

obvious, the evidence and declarations by witnesses were ignored; unfortunately, the perpetrators were acquitted of all charges.

With respect, this Assembly wishes to draw your attention, as the prudent and discerning prime minister of Iran, to the grave consequences of this incident, and in particular to one important point: should the fanatic extremists, the malicious, the villains and the corrupt members of the society, in their thirst for the blood of every Baha'i and in their growing and deceitful desire to kill and pillage the Baha'is all over Iran, and while having no obstacle or deterrent except for the power of the state and might of the government, get the impression that the judicial authorities have yielded in fear to the threats of the fanatics and the ill-wishes, then to what degree will they rise in their boldness, cruelty and atrocity, murdering and looting all Baha'is in every locality in Iran? Would it be possible then to prevent them from [committing] terrifying atrocities and dreadful actions in the future? As is currently the case in other localities, such as Bandar Jaz, Babolsar, Najafabad of Isfahan, Hesar of Khorasan, Shazan of Iraq, Neyriz of Fars, Zabol, Birjand, etc., agitators and villains have begun their harassment and assault against the Baha'is in various forms. In other locations, such as Zahedan, perpetrators looted a Baha'i home and threatened them with murder, and [committed] such battery and assault against a Baha'i woman that she is [on her] deathbed.

This Assembly has received more alarming reports from Birjand, and there are grave concerns that should the authorities in central provinces fail in their utmost diligence to prevent the villains and the ill wishers from their seditions and conspiracies, the recent news of the acquittal of Shahroud perpetrators from all charges will cause such a heightened upheaval among the agitators and fanatic mob, instigated by the enemies and ill-wishers, that control of the situation will get out of hand and the scope of their activities will stretch to such an extent as to reach every corner of Iran, causing irreversible and irreparable damage.

The diligent and farsighted prime minister of Iran and the vigorous members of his cabinet no doubt are closely monitoring the affairs of the country and will try to protect the rights of its people with utmost endeavour day and night; nonetheless, after the surprising judgement by the criminal court of Tehran, we have no alternative but to submit this letter to that sublime station and fulfil our conscientious and religious duty in presenting the facts and bringing the atrocities against the Baha'is to your attention.

Baha'is of Iran, numbering much more than all other religious minorities in the country, as well as Baha'is all over the world, currently residing in over 80 countries, one and all, look to Iran, the blessed birthplace of the Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith, with admiration and respect, and look forward for justice to be observed under all conditions, for the charter of the United Nations, to which Iran is a signatory—one of the explicit articles of which calls for freedom of religion and belief—to be observed and enforced, and the rights of the minorities to be fully protected.

With respect,

Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iran,

Ali-Akbar Foroutan

[Signature]