

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets]

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

In the name of God

With greetings, I, Ghavamoddin Sabetian—74, occupation: carpenter, address: Sari, Pasdaran Boulevard, before Shahid Ghorbani Alley—would like to convey the following to you. For seven months, in 1394 [2015], in the month of Khordad [June/July], and Tir of 1395 [May/June 2016], and now for the third time since 11 Aban 1395 [1 November 2016], my business, which is the only source of livelihood for my family, was sealed, without my knowledge or presence, by the respected agents of the Public Places Supervision Office of Sari. The reason for this is that I will not renounce my religion, as I am a Baha'i, and based on my belief, work has to be suspended for nine days during the year, during which, naturally, the shades at the store are shut. These few days [when work is suspended] have been the long-time tradition since the inception of this Faith, and are nothing new. The closure of business premises is within the 15-day allowance sanctioned by the Trade Unions Act for non-sensitive businesses. In order to reopen the shop, the respected Public Places Supervision Office puts forward an undertaking which is fundamentally contrary to the Trade Unions Act, the Human Rights Constitution and citizenship rights, and is indeed a violation of all freedom and liberties. Valued friend, our lineage goes back to ancestors in this sacred land from time immemorial, who lived, worked hard, contributed and eventually passed away to the high heavens. Now it is your turn and mine. What melody and harmony can we offer, what gift can we put forth towards our Creator from our time together and our cooperation? As a Baha'i poet has beautifully expressed:

O people, we are all members of the human race and servants of one God

We are all sisters and brothers – as we are the children of one mother and one father

This beautiful poem by the poet from Shiraz on a wall in the United Nations illuminates the eyes of every intellectual and luminary beholder of the world.

Children of Adam....

38 years have passed, and there is not a single act of oppression to which the Baha'i community has not been subjected, including my own family in this township of [illegible], situated at Keshavarz Boulevard in Sari. After months of inflicting pain and suffering, one midnight in Bahman 1357 [January/February 1979], a group of people raided [the home of] my mother- and father-in-law, who were both sick, with a sickly thirty-year-old son and their other children. They tore down the entrance and entered the house, cursing. Those poor souls fled with great difficulty over the back wall into the neighbour's garden and walked to my home through the dark alleyways. The clock showed 3:00 a.m. when we heard the doorbell. We opened the door and found them in such a state of despair, the likes of which history has rarely seen. They had hardly any clothes on and their bare feet were covered in mud. They were broken-hearted, weeping as if doomsday had come. No one knows [of their state] but the Peerless God. Their belongings had been pillaged, their home had been destroyed and their automobile had been consumed by flames of fire. [This is] similar to the incidents in the Village of

Ivel, one hundred kilometres from Sari, where I was born, where, from 1357 to 1362 [1978-1983], there were no afflictions that Baha'is were spared at the hands of the local residents. 7 Tir 1362 [28 June 1983] was the last day of their lives in their hometown. [The authorities] displaced everyone from their homes with the force of sticks and clubs. Even providing refuge to them at the homes of children and relatives was considered a crime by some people and subject to incarceration and torture. I was arrested under the same pretense, and held and imprisoned for six months by the Revolutionary Court. Everyone's property was pillaged, homes were destroyed with bulldozers and graders, wishes and hopes for children's higher education turned to despair and anguish and they were left broken-hearted for unknown destinies. Again, for the same reason, I was imprisoned. Respected friends, we all share the same country and are members of one body. We should not allow others to teach us lessons in human and citizenship rights. Its charter has been a relic of the noble thoughts of our ancestors in this land for thousands of years, and the world luminaries from the east to the west have read it. What happened that their descendants are being treated this way? The all-knowing God is witness to our actions. Let us compensate for what has been done, hold hands, turn the agony of separation to the joy of friendship and present a proud Iran to our descendants and to the world, because we are all the fruits of one tree and leaves of one branch. My plea is that with the consideration and kindness of that esteemed authority, the closed doors may be opened again and darkness may turn into light. We pray day and night for your benevolent actions.

Ghavamoddin Sabetian

[Signature]