

[TRANSCRIPT OF ORIGINAL NEWS ARTICLE IN ENGLISH]

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Iranian secret policy memo to persecute Baha'is exposed

By Mirror reporter

Despite a long history of denials, startling new evidence that the Iranian Government has established a carefully considered high-level policy to oppress and persecute the 350,000-members of Baha'i community in Iran has been established.

Details of a secret memorandum issued by Iran's Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council that sets forth the official policy of the central government towards the Baha'is were revealed by Professor Reynaldo Galindo Pohl to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva recently.

The policy, according to quotations from the secret memorandum provided by Professor Pohl, a copy of which was made available to the Family Mirror, aims at treating the Baha'is of Iran "such that their progress and development shall be blocked."

The memorandum says, for example, that all Baha'is should be expelled from universities; that they shall be denied "positions of influence," and instead only be allowed to "lead a modest life similar to that of the population in general," and that "a plan shall be formulated to combat and destroy the cultural roots which this group has outside the country.

"The discovery of this document confirms that the Iranian Government, despite its denials, has in fact engaged in systematic effort to oppress and persecute the Baha'is in Iran, with the ultimate objective of eliminating them as a viable community," said Mr. Techeste Ahderon, senior representative to the United Nations for the Baha'i international community.

The document indicates, for example, that the Government wants to keep the Baha'is illiterate and uneducated, living only at subsistence level, and fearful at every moment that even the tiniest infraction will bring the threat of imprisonment or worse.

The Baha'is, according to the memorandum, will be allowed to go to school, but only if they do not identify themselves as Baha'is and even then they should be sent to schools which have a strong religious ideology.

The intended effect of this policy, according to the Family Mirror sources within the human rights lobby, appears to create an environment where the Baha'i community of Iran can be slowly strangled without arousing international attention and destroy the cultural roots of the Baha'is outside Iran.

"The world has known for years that Baha'is have been targets of persecution in Iran," Mr. Ahderom said. "However this document brings to light the degree to which the persecution of the Baha'is is controlled and condoned at the highest levels of the Iranian government."

Since 1979, more than 200 Baha'is have been executed or killed in Iran, hundreds have been imprisoned, and thousands have been deprived of their jobs, pensions and education.

According to reports, the rate of killings slowed in the 1980s and early 1990s. Professor Galindo Pohl has been investigating charges of human rights violations in Iran for the UN Commission of Human Rights as its Special representatives since 1985.

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