

[TRANSCRIPT OF ORIGINAL NEWS ARTICLE IN ENGLISH]

[Newspaper:] Cook Islands News

[Date:] Saturday, 10 July 1993

Bahai graves destroyed in Iran

The plight of the Bahai's of Iran is again brought to world attention even as far as the Cook Islands.

Earlier in the month, bulldozers started excavating a section of the Bahai cemetery in Teheran to prepare for a building site. As of to date, the excavation has seen graves destroyed and bodies loaded into trucks and removed to unknown destinations.

The cemetery is being cleared for the building of the Kh'avar'an Cultural Centre as part of a plan by the Iranian Governments Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council to destroy the cultural roots of the Bahais.

This plan was revealed in a secret document drafted in February 1991 and publicised by the United Nations earlier this year.

The Khavaran cemetery contains thousands of graves of historic significance to the Bahai community of Iran and to the entire Bahai world.

The grandfather of regular visitor to Rarotonga Duane Veran is also buried there.

While Bahai cemeteries have been pillaged before, this is the first time that bodies have been exhumed and removed without the knowledge of relations and friends.

Since the Iranian revolution, Bahais have been assigned barren pieces of land in which to bury their dead. They have been refused permission to mark individual graves or to build proper mortuary facilities.

In view of these circumstances, it is feared that all traces of the bodies now being removed from the cemetery will be lost.

The Iranian government insist that they are not persecuting the Bahais because of their belief.

The Bahai community of the Cook Islands has urged several leading figures in Iran to intervene in the current desecration of a Bahai cemetery in Teheran.

In a message begging an immediate halt to the destruction of the cemetery the local Bahai's have expressed shock and sadness at such an act of inhuman disrespect for the dead. The message decries the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Councils latest persecution of the Iranian Bahais as a violation of both spiritual and human principles.

The message from the national Bahai council was sent to the leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamerei, the President of Iran, the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Head of the Judiciary Branch of Teheran.

[The content above was transcribed from the original document. If you find any typographic error, kindly email us using the 'Contact' page form.]