

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets.]

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

[The excerpt below is from the section of the article that pertains to the Baha'i Faith]

[Adapted from website:] HRANA - Human Rights Activists News Agency

[Date:] 22 Shahrivar 1393 [13 September 2014]

Noura Sabet, A Baha'i Citizen Deprived of Education, Including Her Tumultuous Account

HRANA News Agency - Noura Sabet, an 18-year-old Baha'i, was barred from entering the university despite earning the required grade to study medicine. In this regard, she has written a letter to the Iranian people describing her sufferings and problems.

According to the HRANA news agency, the news service of the human rights activists in Iran, Noura Sabet is an 18-year-old Baha'i who took the entrance exam for admission to the Iranian universities this year and earned the required grade to study medicine. Due to the obstruction of the authorities and the existence of informal restrictions on the Baha'i community in Iran, especially in the field of education during the last three decades, like many young people and those seeking education in this community, she was barred from entering the university at the beginning of the academic year.

In recent days, as in every year, a large number of young Baha'i students seeking education who have obtained the necessary grades to enter universities are faced with vague messages when entering the Sanjish¹ website. After follow-up they are told they cannot enter the university because of their religious beliefs.

Ms. Sabet has also written a tumultuous account in this regard, which HRANA has published as follows:

Dear Fellow-citizens,

With respect and reverence

I am Noura Sabet, an 18-year-old Baha'i student who passed the entrance exam for medical studies in Iranian universities this year. Like my other Baha'i friends and peers, I was barred from entering Iranian universities simply because of my belief in the Baha'i Faith. Surely, the description of the events that happened to me and my friends when referring to the Sanjish has reached everyone. This year, as in previous years, a large number of Baha'i students have been barred from entering Iranian universities, and officials are indifferent to the issue, ending with statements such as, "We are sorry" or "We cannot do anything for you." They refuse [to provide] any convincing answer. The fact that

¹ [Sanjish: Educational Assessment and Evaluation Organization]

Baha'is are deprived of education is not a new issue; it has been going on for over 35 years and is covered up by public officials of the Islamic Republic.

This year, too, despite the government's claims of prudence and hope to work for justice, there has been no change in the practice of depriving Baha'is of education. For several years, the Islamic Republic has been using clever policies to send a handful of [Baha'i] students to university every year, which does not last long, because these few people are either expelled in the first semester or refused when it is time to receive their degree. With this trick, the Islamic Republic and its representatives, such as Mr. Mohammad-Javad Larijani, are taking advantage of such a situation and claiming in international forums that Baha'i students are studying in Iranian universities.

On the other hand, the officials of the Islamic Republic and the Sanjish claim that they have helped the Baha'i students to enter the university, stating that they have removed the religion column in the entrance exam registration form. Although this claim is true, the removal of the religion column causes more harassment for young people, because they have to work hard for years, i.e. from the first year of high school, to succeed in the National University Entrance Examination, and after going through a lot of hardships and experiencing the joy of getting the right grade to be accepted into university, they face deprivation, and this is much more painful for young people.

On the other hand, removing the column for religion in the National University Entrance Examination registration form is an action that benefits the Islamic Republic. Addressing the international community, they claim untruthfully, "We do not have inquisition of beliefs in Iran and the Baha'is are attending the universities." They think they have given a valid answer to international organizations; however, after many years, everyone knows that this claim is unjustified and false.

What about my love and interest and the love and interest of young people like me in studying and staying in Iran and helping to revitalize and develop this country? As an Iranian eager to serve my homeland and my dear compatriots, should our scientific destiny and future be decided in Iran, or should we go abroad because we are interested in continuing our education? Of course, we are not interested in leaving Iran; we want a loving life with our compatriots, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in Iran, but this is part of the planned efforts of the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran to expel the Baha'is from Iran. State officials are apparently demanding our smooth exit and the reduction of members of this minority community and putting more pressure on the remnants in this country.

Dear friends, peers and compatriots, ending this painful and chronic suffering requires the solidarity and cooperation of the Iranian public, and certainly breaking the silence and indifference in such issues will change the current atmosphere of society and strengthen our collective forces to build the future of our beloved homeland, Iran.

As Saadi has said, [Persian poem]². According to the famous hadith of Prophet Mohammad, "If a Muslim hears the cry of injustice and oppression of a person and does not rise to his aid, he is not a real Muslim."

Today, in hearing the voice of the oppressed Baha'i youth deprived of education, join us to end this oppression and injustice. Certainly, every effort and step in this field will be appropriate and timely. May we live together more peacefully and help each other to build a more prosperous Iran.

With respect, and with the hope of building a society free from any prejudice and discrimination,
Noura Sabet

² [The original text is as follows: "چو عضوی ببرد آورد روزگار دگر عضوها را نماند قرار"]