

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets]

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

The Respected Governor of the Province of Kiasar,

Greetings; we would like to inform you of a problem which a number of Baha'is in the Village of Ivel have been facing. We hope that with your cooperation and compassion and your leadership qualities, of which we are aware, this problem can be resolved.

We are about thirty families who were residents of Ivel. In 1362 [1983] we were cruelly thrown out of our homes, which contained all our childhood memories, only because of being Baha'is. We were forced to wander to Sari and other neighbouring towns, when, like other citizens, we owned our own homes and farms, had families, and children who went to school, had relatives, had a place to bury our dead, had lands for farming, and we all had a sense of friendship and cooperation [with our fellow citizens]. But now, only because we are Baha'is, we cannot stay in our native land to farm or sleep peacefully, even for one night, in our homes, which they have lately tried to burn. The majority of the individuals [who do this] are our relatives, but because of their greed we are not allowed [to live in our homes]. What is the reason for this enmity? We come to this world to praise God and love one another; why do we forget the fact that we are all guests in this world for a short time?

Did not His Holiness the Imam [Khomeini] say—according to religious guidance issued to the Judicial High Council, dated 4 Bahman 1362 [24 January 1984]—that the Baha'is are protected under Islam; they are “Maḥququ’ d-Dam” [whom it is unlawful to kill] and their belongings are to be respected? The respected leader of the revolution has stated that all the people should be treated with justice, and there is no difference between them. The respected president has also stated that all the government offices of the country should keep in mind the [principles] of equality and justice; we should not close our eyes and allow injustice, which is noticed by everyone, to spread. We should act according to the constitution of this country, which calls for equality and order.

According to Article 308 of the Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, usurpation is considered to be the seizure of another person's rights; and in Article 309, if anyone tries to prevent an individual from possession of his own belongings, if he is doing it deliberately, he will be liable for it. According to Article 311 of the Civil Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the usurper is required to return the property which he has seized by force to its rightful owner; there are [also] a few other [laws] in which the defence of human rights has been stressed.

Now, we, the oppressed residents of Ivel, are requesting that our respected governor make arrangements for us to be able to go to this place freely and stay in our homes with ease and peace of mind. This is a small request from the rightful owners of these homes.

With utmost respect,

The Baha'is of the Village of Ivel

21 Khordad 1386 [11 June 2007]

[Signatures of twenty-three individuals]