

[TRANSCRIPT OF ORIGINAL NEWS ARTICLE IN ENGLISH]

[Students should be able to start the academic year, without fear of being questioned about their beliefs](#)

NEW YORK—12 September 2019—

As millions of children and youth begin the new school year in Iran, Bahá'ís across the country prepare to diligently pursue their studies to better serve their compatriots. The Bahá'í International Community was disheartened to note, therefore, that among the comments made by the Minister of Education of Iran about the coming school year, he said that if students state that they belong to a religion that is not officially-recognized, then this expression of belief can be considered propaganda and they would be banned from school. The country's Minister of Education is effectively asking children to lie about their identity.

Deprivation of a child's access to education because of their beliefs, is an absolute travesty of justice. Unfortunately, the Bahá'ís in Iran have been systematically targeted in this respect. Indeed, the Minister's comments reiterate the Iranian authorities' intention to “block the progress and development” of the Iranian Bahá'í community, as outlined in a 1991 memorandum signed by Iran's Supreme Leader. The international community will, no doubt, maintain a watchful eye in the months to come so as to ensure no Iranian child or youth is deprived of education because of having or expressing their identity and beliefs and refusing to lie when asked.

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