

[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:] Zeitoon

[Date:] 6 Esfand 1399 [24 February 2021]

Collective Statement by Iranian Religious Modernists

Condemning Confiscation of Baha'i Property

Zeitoon – Fourteen religious modernists issued a statement “strongly condemning” the confiscation of property of the Iranian Baha'is and urging the government and the judiciary to deal with their complaints with “impartiality”.

The full text of this statement, signed by Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari, Mohammad Javad Akbarin, Abdolali Bazargan, Mohammad Borghei, Ahmad Alavi, Hassan Fereshtian, Reza Alijani, Soroush Dabbagh, Hossein Kamali, Ali Tahmasebi, Yaser Mirdamadi, Dariush Mohammadpour, Mehdi Momken and Sedigheh Vasmaghi, is as follows:

Collective Statement by Religious modernists of Iran, Condemning Confiscation of Baha'i Property

There is reliable and worrying news coming from Iran that the final confiscation order of the property and agricultural lands of 27 families of Iranian Baha'i compatriots in the Village of Ivel, near the City of Sari, has been issued by the Court of Mazandaran Province, solely because their owners were Baha'is. About eleven years ago, also, the houses of 50 families of Baha'is in the very same village were destroyed. while the Baha'is of this village had played a significant role in its development.

Unfortunately, over the past decade, not only have Baha'i grievances over the demolition of their homes in this village gone unheeded, but now their properties and farmlands have also been officially confiscated. The Ivel Baha'is are among the oldest Baha'i communities in Iran, and efforts to dismantle the Baha'i community in this village are the latest in a series of efforts by the Iranian government to systematically eliminate religious diversity in the country.

The confiscation of Baha'i properties because of their beliefs is a clear example of religious discrimination and religious apartheid, and is not only a blatantly immoral act, contrary to human rights standards, contrary to national security, and unconstitutional, but also incompatible with the humanizing teachings of Islam. The Holy Prophet of Islam was a member of the “Covenant of the Righteous” even before His prophethood; this was an organic and trans-tribal covenant that sought to assert the rights of individuals without regard to tribal ties.

Human rights are the covenant of the righteous of the new world, which gives people equal rights regardless of colour, race, or religious beliefs. The violation of the rights of the Iranian Baha'is to their own property is based on misinterpretation, to force the execution of Article 49 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic. The personal property of the Baha'is does not apply or match any of the criteria listed in this article, such as overcharging, usurpation, bribery, embezzlement, and so on. The government's attempts to give an appearance of legitimacy to the confiscation of the Baha'i property are of no use to those who are aware and informed of their rights. Unofficial reports from Iran also indicate that the confiscation of the property and agricultural land of Ivel Baha'is, unfortunately, is the beginning of a new wave of the government's pouncing to confiscate Baha'i property and land in the cities and villages of the country.

We, a group of religious modernists of Iran, strongly condemn the confiscation of the property of our long-suffering and hardworking fellow Baha'i citizens in Iran. We urgently request that the Iranian government, especially the judiciary of the Islamic Republic, end the brutal confiscation of Baha'i property throughout the country, and impartially attend to the grievances of the Baha'is and other religious minorities in Iran related to the persecution, animosity and insult to which they are subjected.

“It is ‘only’ those who are faithful and do not tarnish their faith with falsehood who are guaranteed security and are ‘rightly’ guided.”¹ (Al-An'am: 82)

Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari,

Mohammad Javad Akbarin,

Abdolali Bazargan

Mohammad Borghei,

Ahmad Alavi,

Hassan Fereshtian,

Reza Alijani,

Soroush Dabbagh,

Hossein Kamali,

Ali Tahmasebi,

Yaser Mirdamadi,

Dariush Mohammadpour,

Mehdi Momken,

Sedigheh Vasmaghi

¹ [Quran 6:82] <https://quran.com/6>