

Baha'i International Community HRC46 Item 4

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The Bahá'í International Community has been heartened by a global campaign in support of the Bahá'ís in Iran – the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority, systematically persecuted for over four decades. The extraordinary support from governments, religious figures including Muslim leaders, lawyers, judges, civil society organizations, farmers and many others has exposed the Iranian government's religious motivation for this persecution to the world.

The campaign came about after Iranian authorities confiscated Bahá'í-owned properties in Ivel, a village in northern Iran, leaving dozens of families internally displaced and economically impoverished. The new developments suggest that the Iranian government may be targeting personal Bahá'í properties as a new tactic in its persecution and as a means to further impoverish the community.

Last year, a series of raids took place on 20 Bahá'í-owned homes and security agents insisted that the owners hand over their property deeds. Economic strangulation has long been part of Iran's persecution of the Bahá'ís.

Bahá'ís are barred from public service jobs, their shops are sealed, Bahá'í employees are dismissed from their places of work and students are banned from university education. All of these policies are rooted in a 1991 memorandum, signed by Iran's Supreme Leader, which called for the “progress and development” of Bahá'ís to be “blocked.”

The international community, as shown in the recent campaign seen by some 52 million people, is calling on Iran to end the baseless persecution of innocent Bahá'ís for their beliefs. Mr. Rehman, you have surely raised the issue of the persecution of the Bahá'ís with the Iranian authorities. What has been their response?

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