

## PRAYER MEETING FOR BAHÁ'IS OF IRAN

Bahá'í Community of Wellington  
cordially invites you

To prayers in support of members of the  
Baha'í Faith imprisoned in Iran because of  
their religious beliefs

Venue: TURNBULL HOUSE  
11 Bowen St, Wellington  
Date: SUNDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2011  
Time: 3:45 p.m. for 4:00 p.m. start

Refreshments will be served  
Please invite your friends



*The seven leading Bahá'ís of Iran  
imprisoned under harsh conditions in  
Tehran since 2008*

### The Situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran

Throughout the past century, the Bahá'ís of Iran have been persecuted. With the triumph of the Islamic revolution in 1979, this persecution has been systematized. More than 200 Bahá'ís have been executed or killed, hundreds more have been imprisoned, and tens of thousands have been deprived of jobs, pensions, businesses, and educational opportunities. All national and local Bahá'í administrative institutions have been banned by the Iranian government, and Bahá'í holy places, cemeteries and community properties have been confiscated, vandalized, or destroyed.

The 300,000-member Bahá'í community is the largest religious minority in that country, and Bahá'ís have been oppressed solely because of religious intolerance. Islamic leaders in Iran have long viewed the Bahá'í Faith as a threat to Islam and have branded the Bahá'ís as heretics. The progressive stands of the Faith on women's rights, independent investigation of truth, and education have particularly rankled Iranian Muslim clerics.

## BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF WELLINGTON

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## Iranian Bahá'í Students Deprived of Higher Education

Since 1979, the government of Iran has systematically sought to deprive its largest religious minority of the right to a full education. Specifically, the Islamic Republic of Iran has for more than 30 years blocked the Bahá'í community from higher education, refusing young Bahá'ís entry into university and college. The government has also sought to close down Bahá'í efforts to establish their own institutions of higher learning.

## Economic Pressure

Economic pressure on Iran's Bahá'í community is acute, with both jobs and business licenses being denied to Bahá'ís. Government jobs are denied to Bahá'í, and Muslims often are pressured to fire Baha'is in their employment.

## What We Seek

"We...request that the Bahá'ís in that country be granted their full rights of citizenship, in order that they may be able to fulfill their heartfelt aspiration to contribute, alongside their fellow citizens, to the advancement of their nation" the Bahá'í International Community states.

"This, indeed, is no more than what you rightfully ask for Muslim minorities who reside in other lands. Bahá'ís merely seek the same treatment from you"

"Our call, then, is in reality a call for respect of the rights of all the Iranian people," the Bahá'í International Community says.

"How can a just society, or a just world, be built on a foundation of irrational oppression and the systematic denial of basic human rights to any minority? Everything your country overtly professes to seek on the world stage is contradicted by your treatment of your own people at home."



The charges against the seven moreover reflect the kinds of false accusations and campaign of misinformation that Iran's regime has used to vilify and defame Baha'is for decades.

Some 20 months after being imprisoned without charge, a trial began on 12 January 2010. Throughout their long wait for justice, the seven had received hardly one hour's access to their legal counsel and suffered appalling treatment and deprivations, including psychological and physical hardship.

The initial sentence of 20 years imprisonment for each of the defendants, met with outrage and condemnation throughout the world. The jail terms were later reduced to 10 years, according to information conveyed orally to their lawyers.