The Sentinel Project

Preliminary Assessment: The Threat of Genocide to the Bahá'ís of Iran

Current to: 15 May 2009

Threat Level: High - Preparation is sufficient for extermination, intent is apparent, ideal conditions for extermination not yet present.

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction: Situation Overview....3
2.0 Background Information....3
2.1 Demographic Information....3
2.2 Iranian Political History....3
2.3 Overview of the Bahá'í Faith....4
3.0 Predisposing Factors for Genocide in Iran....4
4.0 Intent....5
5.0 Stages of the Genocidal Process and Practical Indicators Present in Iran....6
5.1 Classification....6
5.2 Symbolization....7
5.3 Dehumanization....7
5.4 Organization....7
5.5 Polarization....8
5.6 Preparation....8
6.0 Future Escalation....8
6.1 Potential Accelerators....8
6.2 Potential Triggers....9
7.0 Expected Indicators of Future Escalation....10
8.0 Potential Perpetrators....10
8.1 State Organizations....10
8.2 Paramilitary Organizations....11
8.3 Non-State Actors....11
9.0 Further Investigation by the Sentinel Project....12
9.1 Questions Requiring Answers....12
9.2 Future Sources....12
10.0 Conclusion....13
Endnotes....14

1.0 Introduction: Situation Overview

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iranian Bahá'ís have suffered intense and systematic abuses at the hands of their government. This persecution has mostly been motivated by the religious convictions of the founders and leaders of the Islamic Republic. They view Bahá'ís as a heretical sect of Islam due to their recognition of a messenger from God after Mohammed, who Muslims hold to be God's final prophet. As a result, Bahá'ís have been stripped of their legal rights and deprived of government employment, economic participation, and higher education. Their property and financial assets are often confiscated and their cultural and religious sites are the targets of an official demolition campaign. Bahá'ís are frequently vilified in the Iranian media and by government officials as foreign agents, spies, and "enemies of Islam." Bahá'ís are barred from publicly practicing their religion or organizing in any way; since 1979, their leaders have faced arrest, imprisonment, and execution. Approximately 200 Bahá'ís have been killed since that time. The remainder of the Iranian Bahá'í population faces constant harassment, assault, and vandalism by government agents. Currently, the top seven Bahá'í leaders in Iran are awaiting trial on such vague charges as "the spreading of corruption on earth," which carries the death penalty.[1]

This situation has made Iranian Bahá'ís an extremely vulnerable, dehumanized, and threatened minority. The Iranian government appears bent on destroying the Bahá'í religion itself and coercing its followers to convert to Islam but it is also highly likely that, under certain circumstances, they may turn to even more violent means and seek to physically exterminate the Bahá'í population.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Demographic Information

Iran has a population of approximately 70 million people. Ethnically, Persians represent a majority at 51% of the population, while Azeris account for 24%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurds 7%, Arabs 3%, Lurs 2%, Balochs 2%, Turkmens 2%, and other 1%. Religiously, Muslims represent a 98% majority; 89% of the population is Shi'a and 9% is Sunni. Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Bahá'ís represent a combined 2% of the population. Of these non-Muslim religious minorities, Bahá'ís are the largest single group with an estimated 300 000 members.[2] Nonetheless, Bahá'ís represent only 0.4% of the Iranian population.

2.2 Iranian Political History

Iran was a monarchy from 1795 to 1979. The Qajar dynasty ruled until it was deposed in 1925 in favour of the army officer Reza Khan, who had supported an earlier coup and became prime minister. Parliament named Khan the Shah (the title of the monarch) in 1925 and took the name Pahlavi. During Pahlavi rule, Iran enjoyed an increase in prosperity and regional influence but political repression and Western influence increased popular discontent. Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini came to prominence as an opposition leader and was exiled from 1964 until his return during the

Shah's absence in early 1979. Following Khomeini's return from exile, the Islamic Republic of Iran was established on 1 April 1979.[3]

Since the death of Khomeini in 1989, Iranian politics have been marked by constant tension between conservatives and those who advocate reform and a more liberal interpretation of the constitution. The latter also generally advocate normalized relations with neighbouring countries, though they differ on social and economic policies. Presidents Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) were both reformists who found their efforts frustrated by significant opposition from the clerical elite and parliament, which were dominated by conservatives.[4]

The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in June 2005 signaled a strengthening of the conservative position in Iran. Ahmadinejad is a hardliner who considers himself a man of the people. He promised to oppose corruption and remain in solidarity with the poor. As a former Revolutionary Guards officer who volunteered to serve in the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88, Ahmadinejad appears to be a true believer in the Islamic Revolution and has vowed to maintain its principles. Since his election, Ahmadinejad has played a controversial role on the world stage due to such issues as Iran's suspected nuclear program, his denial of the Holocaust, and his constant threats to Israel.[5]

2.3 Overview of the Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Faith is a religion that was founded in Iran during the mid-nineteenth century by a man who came to be known as Bahá'u'lláh ("Glory of God" in Arabic). Its followers have faced severe persecution in their homeland since that time and tens of thousands lost their lives in outbursts of violence. Bahá'u'lláh, who claimed to be a messenger from God, was exiled from Iran to Baghdad and was ultimately sent by the government of the Ottoman Empire to what is the present-day State of Israel. Despite intense persecution within Iran, Bahá'ís have managed to retain their identity.[6]

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent monotheistic religion which recognizes the validity of all other religions. In fact, Bahá'ís consider Bahá'u'lláh to have only been the most recent in a long line of Messengers of God which includes Moses, Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed. They regard humanity as a single race and give no regard to age, race, ethnicity, or class in any of their activities. Bahá'ís renounce violence and do not participate in partisan politics but profess loyalty to the government of whatever country they live in. Today, Bahá'ís number approximately 5 million worldwide.[7]

3.0 Predisposing Factors for Genocide in Iran

A number of conditions increase the likelihood of genocide taking place within a given state and facilitate its perpetration, though they do not in themselves make genocide inevitable. The following predisposing factors are present in Iran:

a) *Preexisting anti-Bahá'í hostility* - Iran was the birthplace of the Bahá'í Faith in the mid-nineteenth century, but its followers have been continuously persecuted as a combined result of popular hatred, clerical provocation, and the policies of successive regimes. Those currently inciting hatred of Bahá'ís have made some attempts to exploit this history of prejudice.

b) *History of serious human rights abuses* - Iran had a very poor human rights record even prior to the Islamic Revolution and it has only worsened since then. Ethnic and religious minorities, women, homosexuals, and political dissidents have all been targets of both official and unofficial abuse. Such systemic and systematic abuses lower the value placed on human life and accustom the government and its agents to abusing and killing members of the population.

c) *Economic distress and difficult life conditions* - Economic distress and difficult life conditions increase the likelihood of genocide for three reasons. First, they create a sense of insecurity in the majority population which prompts them to look for scapegoats - such as internal minorities, external enemies, or both - to explain their misfortune and act aggressively towards them. This aggression ostensibly serves to preserve the threatened collective self-concept and self-esteem of the majority.[8] Second, they increase the willingness of the populace to follow charismatic and radical leaders,[9] especially if they promise to improve conditions and return them to their (real or imagined) former prosperity, often through drastic measures. Third, these conditions create large portions of the population - usually disaffected, unemployed youth - who are willing to participate in, or at least support, attacks on minorities.[10] This final point is of particular concern, as Iranian government estimates place the unemployment rate at 12.5% as of 2008.[11] Unemployment is much higher among young workers, which, combined with low wages, has led to labour-related unrest in the recent past.[12] This situation is only promising to worsen in the near future.[13]

d) *Strong state apparatus* - The Iranian government is able to call upon vast police, military, paramilitary, and intelligence resources. It also exercises extensive control over the media. Such a regime is able to easily quell dissent and crush any physical resistance to its policies. Such a regime is well-positioned to perpetrate a genocide with almost complete impunity.

e) *Ideologically-motivated "revolutionary" regime* - The current Iranian republic was founded during the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the values of which are enshrined in the Iranian constitution. As the preamble of the constitution states, "The basic characteristic of this revolution... is its ideological and Islamic nature."[14] The remainder of the document outlines the structure of the populist theocracy which exists today. Such exclusionary, quasi-utopian visions are very dangerous for minorities, especially when the ideology which they espouse is religious in nature. Religious minorities within such a state are seen as dissenters by virtue of their "heretical" beliefs and supposed links to the old social order that the revolution seeks to sweep away.

4.0 Intent

It is difficult to determine whether or not the Iranian government has the genocidal intent to physically exterminate the Bahá'í population within Iran. Certain documents indicate that the regime is making a deliberate effort to destroy the viability of

the Bahá'ís as a community. The Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council issued a memorandum on 25 February 1991 containing directives for government actions towards the Bahá'í community.[15] This document was brought to public attention in early 1993 in a report by Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, the UN Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights.[16] The document outlines policies to "counter" the "Bahá'í question," stating that "the government's dealings with them [Bahá'ís] must be in such a way that their progress and development are blocked."[17] While making some conditional promises of Bahá'í physical safety and subsistence, the document goes on to order that "they must be expelled from universities," that "their political (espionage) activities must be dealt with," officials are to "deny them employment" and "any position of influence," and that propaganda must be used "to counter the... religious activities of Bahá'ís."[18] Ominously, the document even looks beyond Iran's borders and states that "a plan must be devised to confront and destroy their cultural roots outside the country."[19]

While the "Bahá'í question" memorandum does not call for the physical extermination of Iranian Bahá'ís, it does provide clear evidence of an overarching state-directed plan with the intent of destroying the Bahá'í Faith and community, apparently through forced conversion to Islam. This refutes subsequent government denials of involvement in the intensifying attacks on Bahá'ís. Since the government's intent to suffocate the Bahá'í community has thus been established, it is possible that it will in the future turn to even harsher methods if this "soft" approach fails to produce the desired results.

5.0 Stages of the Genocidal Process and Practical Indicators Present in Iran

While it has not been determined that genocide is currently taking place in Iran, the persecution of Iranian Bahá'ís shares many common features with past and ongoing genocides. The model of the genocidal process used to assess the events in Iran is the "Eight Stages of Genocide" developed by Gregory H. Stanton.[20] It must be noted that this model is non-linear and that, while the lower stages usually precede the upper ones, the operational processes may occur simultaneously throughout a genocide. A number of practical indicators (observable events corresponding to each stage of the theoretical model) have been documented and used to assess whether or not each stage is taking place in Iran.[21]

5.1 Classification

Article 19 of the Iranian constitution guarantees the rights and freedoms of all Iranian citizens regardless of ethnicity, race, or language.[22] It does not, however, explicitly mention religion as being irrelevant to individual rights. On the contrary, the enjoyment of such rights is actually contingent upon membership in the correct religions. Article 13 defines the legally recognized religious minorities as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity.[23] Thus, all the people of Iran are classified by religion and Bahá'ís are implicitly defined as an out-group and deprived of all legal rights and protection within Iran.

5.2 Symbolization

This is the process by which a target group comes to be identified not as individual human beings but merely units within a collective. They are then labeled - sometimes even with their proper group name, as in the case of Bahá'ís - in such a way that supposed characteristics can be easily generalized to all members of a group. Such generalizations are especially successful in the case of Bahá'ís, who represent a tiny minority of the Iranian population. As a result, the majority of Iranians have never actually met a Bahá'í and lack any experience against which to compare the information they are told. This is an important step in the formation of stereotypes and the dehumanization of the target group.

5.3 Dehumanization

Bahá'ís have long been the targets of propaganda and hate speech in the Iranian media, a campaign which has intensified in recent years. They are often attacked as threatening and subhuman on religious, political, and social grounds. In the first case, Islamic clerics define Bahá'ís as "heretics" because they recognize the founder of their faith as being a messenger from God after Mohammed (see section *1.0 Introduction*). Politically, Bahá'ís (despite being members of a pacifistic and apolitical religion) are often accused of being linked to foreign governments such as Israel and the United States as well as the pre-1979 monarchy. Most notably, they are accused of acting as spies for Israel and of having collaborated with the secret police of the former regime. In the social realm, there has been an effort to discourage other Iranians from associating with Bahá'ís by constantly describing the latter as being "prostitutes," "incestuous," and "unclean."[24] This propaganda appears in all media - newspapers, television,[25] radio broadcasts, films, websites, and public statements by government officials - and serves to erode the humanity of Bahá'ís. Once Bahá'ís are effectively dehumanized, it will be easier for perpetrators to kill them and for observers to either support the extermination or remain neutral bystanders.

5.4 Organization

The Iranian state has a number of forces at its disposal which could be used to perpetrate a genocide of Bahá'ís. These forces include the conventional army, the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, the police, and the Basij militia. These forces have widely varying levels of capability and ideological commitment, but each is a potential source of killers. In the case of paramilitary forces such as the Basij militia and especially non-state groups such as the Ansar-i Hizbullah, their ostensibly weaker connections to the state may allow the regime to deny its involvement in any large-scale anti-Bahá'í violence. For more information on these forces, see section *9.0 Potential Perpetrators*.

5.5 Polarization

The Iranian government is working, especially through the media, to separate Bahá'ís as far as possible from the rest of society. This strengthens the position of both clerical and secular conservative hardliners who wish for their destruction while neutralizing the moderate centre which has the most potential to help Bahá'ís. This has been accomplished by casting Bahá'ís as both heretics and internal enemies linked to powerful foreign threats. Any Iranian who advocates equal treatment for Bahá'ís or defends their rights is then accused of being in league with these enemies.

5.6 Preparation

The Iranian government has taken a number of steps to weaken the position of Bahá'ís within Iran and to prepare them for possible extermination. Most notably, Bahá'ís have been excluded from government employment, have only restricted economic participation, and are barred from higher education. Many of their historical and cultural sites, including cemeteries, have been destroyed in order to erase every trace of their existence. Bahá'í property and financial assets are often confiscated, and both vandalism and violence against individuals are increasing. In late 2005, the headquarters of the Iranian military instructed various police forces, intelligence agencies, and the Revolutionary Guards to identify and monitor all Bahá'ís within Iran.[26] In 2008 the top seven Bahá'í community leaders in Iran were arrested and imprisoned without charge. In early 2009, these leaders were accused of espionage and are now awaiting what is likely to be a purely show trial.[27] If convicted - which is highly likely - they may be executed, a fate met by numerous other Bahá'í leaders since the 1979 revolution. These developments have left the Bahá'í community extremely vulnerable to further attacks as it is now impoverished, undereducated, closely monitored, and leaderless.

6.0 Future Escalation

The Iranian government clearly has the intent of destroying the cultural viability of the Bahá'í community within its borders, and also possesses the capability to destroy it physically. The Iranian government has not yet taken this very grave step, but there are a number of factors which could intensify the persecution (accelerators) or provoke a genocidal massacre (triggers).

6.1 Potential Accelerators

The security of Iranian Bahá'ís is likely to deteriorate further under the following conditions:

a) *Further economic decline* - A worsening of the economic situation in Iran may have several implications for Bahá'ís. Social tensions will continue to increase, particularly among unemployed youth who will be increasingly radicalized and primed for recruitment into militias. Anti-Bahá'í hostility may also increase as Iranians search for scapegoats upon whom to blame their hardships.

b) *Increases in conservative power* - If religious hardliners gain further influence, they are likely to feel more comfortable implementing harsher treatment of all religious minorities, particularly Bahá'ís since they enjoy the fewest protections of all.

c) *Challenges to conservative power* - Weak, unstable, and threatened regimes are dangerous because they are unpredictable and may begin to act irrationally in an effort to either retain power or fulfill their ideological goals before losing power. Thus, any challenges to the power of religious hardliners may increase their likelihood of taking drastic actions.

d) *Continued frustration of attempts to convert Bahá'ís to Islam* - Iranian religious leaders may begin to promote harsher methods of dealing with Bahá'ís if they are unable to destroy their community and religion through "softer" means. Such leaders are currently attempting to coerce Bahá'ís into renouncing their "heretical" faith but have so far met with failure; if Bahá'ís continue to successfully resist conversion their tormentors may begin to consider extermination to be the only viable option for removing their religion from Iranian society.

6.2 Potential Triggers

A general massacre of Iranian Bahá'ís is likely to occur if any real or perceived threats to Iranian security or Islamic domination arise. The most likely cases will be:

a) *Foreign military strike on Iran* - The realization of perceived external threats to Iran could cause the government to turn against perceived internal enemies. This is especially likely in the case of an attack by Israel or the United States for two reasons. First, Bahá'ís are already linked by Iranian propaganda to both of the countries for which they supposedly act as espionage agents or "fifth columnists." Second, Iran would be unlikely to be able to retaliate immediately and directly against either of these countries and would therefore be even more likely to turn against a perceived internal enemy which could be used as a temporary scapegoat while organizing for actual military action. War also provides an excellent opportunity for the perpetration of genocide as fear and confusion reign while normal inhibitions against killing are reduced.

b) *Significant internal unrest and/or violence* - If a significant popular opposition were to rise up against the Iranian regime, or if any of the low-level ethnic secessionist movements currently active in several of Iran's provinces were to become more aggressive or successful, it is likely that the consequent repression would involve increased persecution of Bahá'ís. Either situation would provide both a likely motive and an excellent opportunity for the regime to perpetrate a genocide, for similar reasons as relate to a foreign military strike.

7.0 Expected Indicators of Future Escalation

If the Iranian regime does escalate its persecution of Bahá'ís in the future or move to complete their preparation for extermination, this may be recognized by a number of indicators such as:

a) *Immobilization of Bahá'í population* - An important part of the genocidal process is preventing the target group from accessing escape routes. In Iran, this may be seen as the restriction of Bahá'í travel within the country and/or the prohibition of emigration.

b) *Concentration of Bahá'í population* - Similar, and usually subsequent, to immobilization is the act of concentration, or "ghettoization," as the perpetrators gather the target population into central areas where they may be more easily killed or from which they may be more easily expelled.

c) *Segregation of males and females* - The removal of males from the target group is often a pre-killing measure taken by the perpetrators in order to break down social bonds within the group and neutralize those members thought to be most able and likely to resist.

d) *Removal of Bahá'í children* - Because the persecutors of Iranian Bahá'ís consider the harmful nature of their targets to be rooted in Bahá'í beliefs rather than any innate or biological traits, they have sometimes offered condemned Bahá'ís the opportunity to save their lives by recanting their faith. While this has proven unsuccessful with adults, they may eventually remove children from their families and attempt to raise them as Muslims, thus destroying the Bahá'í community's generational continuity.[28]

8.0 Potential Perpetrators

There are several organizations upon which the Iranian government could call to perpetrate a genocide against Bahá'ís. Some are conventional forces (i.e. police or military) directly controlled by the state. The non-conventional forces present in Iran are either paramilitary organizations controlled by the state or non-state organizations which would be likely to aid in a genocide of Bahá'ís. This section outlines potential perpetrator organizations. Individual leaders and other persons-of-interest will be investigated further and discussed in a future report.

8.1 State Organizations

The Iranian government has significant conventional forces which it can call upon to serve both internal and external security purposes.

a) *Army* - The Iranian Army has an estimated numerical strength of 350 000 men.[29] This is believed to be a well-trained, efficient, and disciplined force due to modernization efforts following the bitter experience of the Iran-Iraq War.[30]

b) *Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution* - With a ground force strength estimated in excess of 100 000 men, this force, commonly called the Revolutionary Guards, is a more ideologically-committed military organization operating independently, but parallel to, the conventional army while playing a large role in internal security.[31] This would make them likely to help perpetrate a genocide of Bahá'ís.

c) *Police forces* - Iran has an estimated 40 000 personnel in its law enforcement forces which are distributed throughout the country.[32]

8.2 Paramilitary Organizations

The Iranian government is also able to call upon a large, though mostly young, untrained, and lightly-armed body of men for internal use. At present, only one such force is of note:

a) *Niruyeh Moghavemat Basij* - The main paramilitary force in Iran, this group's name means Mobilization Resistance Force in English, though it is often referred to simply as Basij (also Bassij or Baseej). Basij is a primarily youth organization with an estimated active strength of up to 300 000 personnel,[33] though it can draw on much larger reserves; some estimates place its mobilization strength as high as 3 million.[34] Basij is under the control of the Revolutionary Guards and aids in internal security operations. Its members are primarily concerned with monitoring the activities of citizens and enforcing Iran's moral laws. Some segments of Basij also perform riot control operations. Overall, the organization is thought to be enjoying something of a revival under the Ahmadinejad presidency.[35] This organization provides the Iranian regime with a large body of individuals who have received ideological and military training; they are likely to participate in a genocide of Bahá'ís and to possibly make up the bulk of the perpetrating forces.

8.3 Non-State Actors

Some Iranian groups have mandates that either explicitly or implicitly make them likely persecutors of Bahá'ís. These groups act independently of the government but have suspected links to it.

a) *Ansar-i Hizbullah* - This organization, whose name means "Followers of the Party of God," is a paramilitary organization with semi-official links to figures within the government, though many in the regime deny this. The size of the organization is unknown. It is primarily focused on attacking those whom it views as violating the precepts of Islam or who advocate change (e.g. reformists

or student protesters), which it views as threatening the permanence of the Islamic Revolution.[36] Ansar-i Hizbullah is already involved in anti-Bahá'í activity as evidenced by a 2007 incident in the city of Abadeh when graffiti was left on a building which said "Hezbollah is awake and despises the Bahá'ís."[37] This organization appears to have the ideological motivation to assist in intensified persecution or even a genocide of Bahá'ís, though more information is needed to assess its capabilities.

b) *Hojjatieh Society* - Little reliable information is available about Hojjatieh, but it is known to be a somewhat secretive organization founded in 1954 specifically for the purpose of eliminating the Bahá'í Faith, which was viewed as the greatest threat to Islam. This organization had significant influence over the lay members of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.[38] It is rumoured that President Ahmadinejad was once a member of Hojjatieh.

9.0 Further Investigation by the Sentinel Project

9.1 Questions Requiring Answers

There are a number of points which have not been covered above, either because they are beyond the scope of this report or because they represent gaps in our knowledge of the situation in Iran. These will be expanded upon in a future comprehensive report. In the latter case, the following questions must be answered:

a) What individuals are likely to be the lead perpetrators of a genocide of Bahá'ís?

b) What level of support would the Iranian population give to a genocide of Bahá'ís?

c) What are the true size, capabilities, and intentions of groups such as Ansar- i Hizbullah and Hojjatieh?

d) Are certain segments of the Iranian population likely to assist Bahá'ís in hiding or escaping?

e) What has been the international reaction to anti-Bahá'í persecution so far?

f) What factors are currently restraining the Iranian government from harsher anti-Bahá'í measures?

g) What measures will be most effective in preventing a genocide of Bahá'ís?

9.2 Future Sources

There are numerous ways to answer the questions posed in section *9.1 Questions Requiring Answers*. The Sentinel Project (SP) gathered the majority of the information

used in this report from open sources such as the media, government reports, and scholarly publications. As this work continues and seeks to answer the above questions, it will be necessary to expand the information gathering effort. For example, SP is currently conducting an interview program to gather firsthand accounts from Bahá'ís who have left Iran and now reside in Canada. Another possible source of information may come from contacts made either within Iran itself or in neighbouring countries who can supply locally available information. Persian-language sources are also currently untapped but may provide a wealth of information once reliable translators are recruited. Analysis of anti-Bahá'í propaganda may also provide useful insights into the intent of the Iranian regime.

10.0 Conclusion

The Bahá'ís of Iran are an extremely tiny and threatened religious minority. The Iranian regime has taken advantage of a long history of anti-Bahá'í persecution in order to achieve its present-day religious and political goals. There are a number of economic, historical, and political factors present in Iran which predispose it to experiencing a genocide. Documentation exists which establishes government intent to destroy the Bahá'í community as a viable entity by suffocating it and attempting to coerce its members to convert to Islam. Genocidal intent cannot yet be entirely established, but the intent to destroy the Bahá'í Faith itself may be extended to its adherents if other measures prove unsuccessful. The Bahá'ís of Iran are impoverished, leaderless, and without legal protection. Government-sponsored propaganda, however, portrays them as powerful internal enemies serving powerful foreign enemies. The Iranian regime is well-prepared to carry out a genocide against Bahá'ís if such a policy decision were made, and could likely do so with impunity using several military and paramilitary forces at its disposal. The situation in Iran requires further investigation to achieve a full understanding. Work must begin as soon as possible to determine what measures will be most effective in de-escalating the persecution or assisting Bahá'ís to reach safety, and how to implement those measures.

Endnotes

[1] "Iranian Bahá'í leaders may face new accusation on anniversary of imprisonment." 12 May 2009. Bahá'í World News Service. http://news.bahai.org/story/713, accessed 13 May 2009.
[2] Hassan, Hussein D. "Iran: Ethnic and Religious Minorities." CRS Report for Congress. Congressional Research Service, 25 November 2008.
[3] "Country Profile: Iran." Library of Congress - Federal Research Division. May 2008: 10.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Hassan, Hussein D. "Iran: Profile of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad." CRS Report for Congress. Congressional Research Service, 9 July 2008.
[6] "Bahá'í Faith." Encyclopedia Britannica. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/48930/Bahai-faith, accessed 12 May 2009.
[7] "The Bahá'í Faith." Bahá'í Topics: An Information Resource of the Bahá'í International Community. http://info.bahai.org/, accessed 12 May 2009.
[8] Staub, Ervin. *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. pp. 13-15, 35-36, 44.
[9] Ibid, p. 24.
[10] Alvarez, Alex. "Militias and Genocide." *War Crimes, Genocide, & Crimes against Humanity*. Volume 2 (2006) 1-33.
[11] "Iran." CIA - The World Factbook. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html, accessed 23 April 2009.
[12] "Country Profile: Iran."
[13] Melik, James. 27 February 2009. "Iran Threatened With Economic Meltdown." BBC News. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7907326.stm, accessed 23 April 2009.
[14] "Iran - Constitution." International Constitutional Law. http://www.servat.unibe.ch/law/icl/ir00000_.html, accessed 23 April 2009
[15] "Iran: Chronology of Events June 1989 - July 1994." January 1995. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/ndp/ref/index_e.htm?docid=191&cid=0&version=printable&disclaimer=show, accessed 14 May 2009.
[16] For the full text of Mr. Galindo Pohl's report, see E/CN.4/1993/41 "Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran." 28 January 1993. United Nations. Acquired from the Human Rights and Democracy Library at http://www.iranrights.org/english/document-226.php, accessed 14 May 2009.
[17] "Bahá'í Question memorandum (English translation and Persian original), 25 February 1991." In *The Bahá'í Question: Cultural Cleansing in Iran*. Bahá'í International Community, September 2008, 83-85.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Stanton, Gregory H. "The Eight Stages of Genocide." Genocide Watch. http://www.genocidewatch.org/8stages.htm, accessed 22 April 2009
[21] The final two stages, "Extermination" and "Denial," have been omitted since large-scale massacres of Bahá'ís have not yet taken place in Iran; hence, there is also nothing for the government to deny. It should be noted, however, that the government has consistently denied any systematic abuses of Bahá'ís and does not even admit to any violation of their human rights.
[22] "Iran - Constitution."
[23] Ibid.
[24] Various interviews conducted by Sentinel Project volunteers with Iranian Bahá'ís who have fled to Canada.
[25] For an example of anti-Bahá'í propaganda, see the Iranian television "documentary" entitled *The Secret of Armageddon*. This production accuses Jews and Bahá'ís of conspiring to take over Iran and destroy Islam. It is available on the website of the Middle East Media Research Institute TV Monitor Project at http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/1802.htm
[26] "Text of secret Iran letter ordering "monitoring" of Baha'is made public." 24 August 2006. Bahá'í World News Service. http://news.bahai.org/story/473, accessed 5 May 2009

[27] Erdbrink, Thomas. "Iran Accuses 7 Jailed Leaders of Bahai Faith of Espionage." 18 February 2009. Washington Post. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/17/AR2009021703011.html, accessed 5 May 2009.

[28] Such an event could also be considered the beginning of the extermination phase, as the forcible transfer of children out of the target group is defined as a genocidal act by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide if done with the requisite genocidal intent.

[29] "General Information - Iran." Federation of American Scientists Military Analysis Network. http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/militarysumsfolder/iran.html, accessed 14 May 2009.

[30] "Jane's World Armies - Iran." 15 April 2009. Jane's Information Group.

[31] Ibid.

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