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News about Baha'is in Iran in September

Eight Baha'is begin prison sentence

Hrana/ Sen's Daily (28.09.2020) – <https://bit.ly/3jMEpZG> – Eight Bahais from Birjand have been given ten days to report to prison to begin serving their sentences. They are **Atieh Saaleh, Nasrin Qadiri, Banafsheh Mokhtaari, Farzaaneh Dimi, Arzu Mohammadi, `Ataa'ollah Maaleki, Sa'id Maaleki and Ru'ya Maaleki.**

On September 7, 2020, the Review Court for Khorasan Province, headed by Judge Ibrahim Ramezani, with Counsellor Hamid Arabzaadehi, sentenced Mrs. Nasrin Qadiri, Farzaaneh Dimi and Banafsheh Mokhtaari to 15 months in prison for “membership in the illegal and subversive organization of the deviant Bahai

sect.” Mrs. Arzu Mohammadi, Ru`ya Maaleki and Atieh Saalehi, and Mr. Ataa`ollah Maaleki and Sa`id Maaleki were given 18-month sentences on the same charge. The same court acquitted Rahmat`ollah Dimi of this charge. The Review Court also handed down one-year concurrent sentences for “propaganda in favor of the Baha`i organization, that being a group and organization opposed to the holy order of the Islamic Republic.”

These Baha`is are among those whose homes were raided in October 2017 in connection with the birth of Baha`u`llah 200 years previously. From the large number of homes in Birjand that were raided at that time, it appears that the Bahais had not gathered to celebrate the day, but were remembering the occasion separately in their homes. They were summoned for interrogation twice in 2019-2020, and tried on April 20 this year.

Mrs. Nasrin Qadiri is not formally a resident of Birjand. She is 60 years old and lives in Mashhad. However from 2014 to early 2018 she often stayed in Birjand to care for her father, who was ill. When the Bahai homes in Birjand were searched in October 2017, she was in Mashhad, but the security agents seized some of her belongings when they searched her father`s house. She was previously imprisoned in 1983 and 2010. In the latter case, she was sentenced to two years in prison, on charges of propaganda against the regime, endangering national security, membership and activity in the Bahai Faith, advocating contact with foreigners after traveling outside the country, participating in illegal organisations, and producing and distributing Bahai CDs and books.

Judge Mahmud Saadaati of Shiraz sanctioned for human rights abuses

AlArabiyya/ Sen's Daily (24.09.2020) – <https://bit.ly/2GG6Mu4> – US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has announced that the United States has imposed sanctions on Judge Seyyed Mahmoud Sadati, Judge Mohammad Soltani, Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz, and on Adel Abad, Orumiyeh, and Vakilabad Prisons.

The notorious human rights abuser Judge Sayyid Mahmud Saadaati, who heads a bench of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz, has specialized in sentencing Baha'is to prison and internal exile for their Bahai beliefs, usually under the guise of "propaganda against the regime," "membership of an illegal organisation," "collusion" or "undermining state security." The evidence in every case is the possession of Baha'i religious materials such as books, images, and computer files. Sittings under Judge Saadaati are often closed. In September 2018 he sentenced five Bahais to prison in closed court, without informing the defendants or their lawyers of the trial.

A sampling of this Judge's persecution of the Baha'i community in Shiraz over recent years can be found with a search of Sen's Daily.

Judge Soltaani heads a Revolutionary Court in Mashhad.

Kimia Mostafavi and Kiaana Rezvaani released

Hrana/ Sen's Daily (20.09.2020) – <https://bit.ly/3nBrImz> – **Kimia Mostafavi and Kiaana Rezvaani**, Baha'is from Kerman, were released from prison in the past week. In September 2019, the Revolutionary Court in Kerman sentenced them to five years in jail for membership in the Bahai organisation, with a one year

concurrent sentence for “propaganda against the regime and in favour of opposition groups.” The Review Court reduced this to six months supervised probation with electronic monitoring, on a charge of “propaganda against the regime.” They served just over two months of this electronic supervision.

They were arrested in Kerman on January 19, 2019, and released on bail five days later. Kiaana Rezvaani is a student excluded from tertiary education because of her religious beliefs.

Farid Moqadam-Ziragi’s five-year sentence confirmed

Hrana/ Sen’s Daily (20.09.2020) – <https://bit.ly/3iLGio7> – The review court for South Khorosan Province has confirmed the 5-year sentence of **Farid Ziragi-Moqadam**, a Baha’i from Birjand. The presiding judge was Ibrahim Ramezaani, with Counsellor Hamid `Arab-zadeh. A Revolutionary Court had already sentenced him to five years in prison on a charge of “membership of the illegal Bahai organisation”, with a one-year concurrent sentence for “propaganda against the regime of the Islamic Republic.” The review court acquitted him of the latter charge. The Court of Review based its sentence on his acting as moderator in a Telegram channel.

However a criminal court in Birjand has also sentenced him to one year in prison for “insulting the sanctities of Islam,” apparently for internet postings included Baha’i interpretations of the Quran, the coming of the Mahdi, the “seal of the prophets” and other theological points. The review court has not yet spoken on that sentence.

Mr. Moqadam-Ziragi, whose name was initially reported as Farid

Moqadam-Ziraki, was arrested on August 3 by agents from the Ministry of Intelligence, who searched his home and seized his personal effects. At the time of his arrest, the accusation was “aggravating the economic sanctions against Iran” and “undermining national security.” These accusations were widely reported in the state-sponsored media. He was interrogated by the Ministry of Intelligence for 26 days before being transferred to Birjand’s Prison. The Ministry evidently failed to find evidence to support the economic and security charges. On September 7 he was released after posting bail of 150 million tumans (32,000 euros ; \$US 35,000).

Mehrdaad Mousavi Khoulenjaani granted prison furlough

Hrana/ Sen’s Daily (11.09.2020) – <https://bit.ly/3jNiIse> – Mehrdaad Mousavi Khoulenjaani, a Baha’i from Shahin Shahr, has been granted a furlough from Dastgerd Prison, near Isfahan. He began a six-month prison term on July 9, 2020. He was charged with “propaganda against the regime in the form of teaching the Baha’i Faith.” He was initially told that he would have to wear an electronic ankle bracelet, but when he objected he was released without the tracing device. If the supervising judge approves, he will not have to return to prison; otherwise he will have to return “next month” (about September 22). However it appears that another case on the same charges is also being prepared against him, by a different arm of the security apparatus.

Mitra Bandi-Amirabaadi-Baaghi and Heyva Yazdaan-Mahdiabaadi-Bahifar bailed in Yazd

Hrana/ Sen’s Daily (01.09.2020) – <https://bit.ly/3iLGALJ> – Mitra Bandi-Amirabaadi-Baaghi and Heyva Yazdaan-Mahdiabaadi-Bahifar were released on bail on September 1 after three months of detention. They were arrested on May 30, and

detained by the Ministry of Intelligence in Yazd. Their release on bail was delayed by opposition from the investigating judge.

In late November, 2017, Heyva Yazdan-Mahdiabadi was arrested for teaching music to children. She was at first held incommunicado by the Ministry of Intelligence, and then transferred to the central prison in Yazd. She was released on bail on December 25, 2017. The report says that both were previously given suspended sentences, which have expired, but does not indicate when this occurred.

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