

Bahá'í International Community

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UPR- Iran

Last October, on the occasion of Iran's UPR review, the Bahá'í International Community issued a publication entitled "Unfulfilled Promised". This document looked at the accepted recommendations that were relevant to the situation of the Bahá'ís and which – had they been implemented, – could have improved not only the situation of the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, but also the overall human rights in the country.

Sadly, this was not the case, and the publication demonstrated that not a single one of those recommendations had been implemented. Bahá'ís remain deprived of the most basic rights to which an Iranian citizen is entitled, let alone the right to profess his or her own religion.

During the review, Mr. Javad Larijani, the head of the delegation, claimed that Bahá'ís "are dealt under the so called citizenship contract" and "enjoy all the privileges of any citizen in Iran", and that "they have professors at the university" and "students at the university." But recently Ayatollah Bojnourdi, who was one of the drafter the Charter for Citizenship Rights, publicly said: "We never say that Baha'is have the right to education; Bahá'ís don't even have citizenship rights!" This is the sad truth of the reality in Iran.

During this review, Iran has accepted only two of the ten recommendations that deal specifically with the situation of the Bahá'ís, and this only partially, as it has entered a caveat, claiming that their full implementation will "need time and lengthy deliberations among different constituent parts of the legislative process." This does not bode very well for the Bahá'ís. However, we remain hopeful that the Iranian government will this time choose to demonstrate the high regard it claims to hold for the UPR. Yes, changing legislation is challenging, but the injustices and discriminations perpetrated against the Bahá'ís are regrettably so numerous, that if the Iranian government is truly committed to stand by its words, it could begin by taking relatively easy steps, such as allowing Bahá'í students unrestrained access to higher education.