

Iran's secret blueprint for the destruction of the Baha'i community

Iran's efforts to deny Baha'is access to higher education must be seen in the context of an overall government policy to destroy the Baha'i community as a cohesive entity.

This was outlined in a secret memorandum, written in 1991, that established a national policy aimed at the quiet strangulation of the Baha'i community. Its measures essentially dictate that Baha'is should be kept illiterate and uneducated, living only at a subsistence level, and fearful at every moment that even the tiniest infraction will bring the threat of imprisonment or worse.

The memorandum clearly seeks to shift tactics from overt persecution, such as killing, torture and imprisonment, to the kind of covert social, economic, and cultural restrictions that would be thought less likely to bring intense international scrutiny and condemnation.

The memorandum was drawn up by the Iranian Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council (ISRCC) at the request of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the then President of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Stamped "confidential," it was signed by Hujjatu'l Islam Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani, Secretary of the Council, and approved by Mr. Khamenei, who added his signature to the document.

Its central focus is a call for Iran's Baha'is to be treated in such a way "that their progress and development shall be blocked."

To accomplish this, the memorandum specifies that Baha'is should be denied "positions of influence," and instead only be allowed to "lead a modest life similar to that of the population in general"; and even that "employment shall be refused to persons identifying themselves as Baha'is."

In terms of education, the memorandum states that Baha'is "must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Baha'is."

The memorandum further directs that Baha'is will be allowed to go to school only if they do not identify themselves as Baha'is, and that they should be sent to schools "with a strong religious ideology," aiming clearly at wresting Baha'i children from their faith.

In 2006, a communication from the director general of the Central Security Office of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology – which oversees all of Iran's state-run universities – instructed 81 universities to expel any student discovered to be a Baha'i.

Stamped 'confidential,' the letter says, "[I]f the identity of Baha'i individuals becomes known at the time of enrollment or during the course of their studies, they must be expelled from university."

The communication also makes a clear reference to the secret 1991 memorandum and its comprehensive plan to 'block' the development and progress of the Iranian Baha'i community.

THE ISRCC DOCUMENT

[Translation from Persian – text in square brackets added by translator]

In the Name of God!
The Islamic Republic of Iran
The Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council
Number: 1327/....
Date: 6/12/69 [25 February 1991]
Enclosure: None

CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani
Head of the Office of the Esteemed Leader [Khamenei]

Greetings!

After greetings, with reference to the letter #1/783 dated 10/10/69 [31 December 1990], concerning the instructions of the Esteemed Leader which had been conveyed to the Respected President regarding the Baha'i question, we inform you that, since the respected President and the Head of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council had referred this question to this Council for consideration and study, it was placed on the Council's agenda of session #128 on 16/11/69 [5 February 1991] and session #119 of 2/11/69 [22 January 1991]. In addition to the above, and further to the [results of the] discussions held in this regard in session #112 of 2/5/66 [24 July 1987] presided over by the Esteemed Leader (head and member of the Supreme Council), the recent views and directives given by the Esteemed Leader regarding the Baha'i question were conveyed to the Supreme Council. In consideration of the contents of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the religious and civil laws and general policies of the country, these matters were carefully studied and decisions pronounced.

In arriving at the decisions and proposing reasonable ways to counter the above question, due consideration was given to the wishes of the Esteemed Leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran [Khamenei], namely, that "in this regard a specific policy should be devised in such a way that everyone will understand what should or should not be done." Consequently, the following proposals and recommendations resulted from these discussions.

The respected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the Head of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council, while approving these recommendations, instructed us to convey them to the Esteemed Leader [Khamenei] so that appropriate action may be taken according to his guidance.

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A. General status of the Baha'is within the country's system

1. They will not be expelled from the country without reason.
2. They will not be arrested, imprisoned, or penalized without reason.
3. The government's dealings with them must be in such a way that their progress and development are blocked.

B. Educational and cultural status

1. They can be enrolled in schools provided they have not identified themselves as Baha'is.
2. Preferably, they should be enrolled in schools which have a strong and imposing religious ideology.
3. They must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Baha'is.
4. Their political (espionage) activities must be dealt with according to appropriate government laws and policies, and their religious and propaganda activities should be answered by giving them religious and cultural responses, as well as propaganda.
5. Propaganda institutions (such as the Islamic Propaganda Organization) must establish an independent section to counter the propaganda and religious activities of the Baha'is.
6. A plan must be devised to confront and destroy their cultural roots outside the country.

C. Legal and social status

1. Permit them a modest livelihood as is available to the general population.
2. To the extent that it does not encourage them to be Baha'is, it is permissible to provide them the means for ordinary living in accordance with the general rights given to every Iranian citizen, such as ration booklets, passports, burial certificates, work permits, etc.
3. Deny them employment if they identify themselves as Baha'is.
4. Deny them any position of influence, such as in the educational sector, etc.

Wishing you divine confirmations,
Secretary of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council
Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Golpaygani
[Signature]
[Note in the handwriting of Mr. Khamenei]
In the Name of God!

The decision of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council seems sufficient.
I thank you gentlemen for your attention and efforts.