

11 January 2012

To :

Mr. Kamran Daneshjoo, Minister of Science, Research and Technology

Islamic Republic of Iran
Piroozan Jonoubi Avenue,
Hormozan Street
Khordin Street, Sanat Square
Shahrak Ghods
Tehran
Iran

And

Mr. Kambiz Sheikh-Hassani

Chargé d'Affaires and Head of Mission
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
245 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, ON
K2P 2K2
Email: executive@iranembassy.ca

Open letter to the Government of Iran:

As members of the Canadian academic community we value higher education as essential to the well-being of society and the peace and prosperity of human beings. The generation, application and diffusion of knowledge and skills is the hallmark of a progressive and just society.

It is with concern that we learn that representatives of the Iranian government have arrested and interrogated Iranian citizens associated with an educational program organized by the Iranian Baha'i Community to provide university education to their members otherwise denied access to universities and colleges because of their religious beliefs.

Facing the violation of their rights to education, now for more than three decades, the Baha'i community took steps to provide some measure of post-secondary education to their young people. We understand that in late May of last year, 19 of those working with this program of education, known informally as the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education, were arrested by government officials. Forty homes associated with the educational program were raided in

coordinated actions across Iran. A number of these individuals remain in prison and your government is now demanding that the educational activities of the Baha'is be stopped – in effect, that the Baha'is stop educating themselves.

We remind you that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a signatory of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Article 13 recognizes “the right of everyone to education” and that, “higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity.”

We are writing to ask that your government take immediate steps to end any efforts to deny Iranian citizens, of whatever background and religion, access to higher education, and to allow members of the Baha'i community, and any others so deprived, the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills that will allow them to contribute more fully to the betterment of Iran and the world. Action by your government to deny education to qualified students represents not only an alarming injustice and violation of Iran's international commitments but runs counter to the finest traditions of Iranian culture and civilization which, in years past, celebrated the pursuit of knowledge, the arts and culture.

Yours sincerely,

Name	Title	Department	University
Ashok Vjih	Maître de Recherche at the Institut de recherche d'Hydro-Québec		
Louigi Addario-Berry	Professor	Mathematics and Statistics	McGill University
Peter Caines	James McGill Professor and Macdonald Chair	Electrical and Computer Engineering	McGill University
Henri Damon	James McGill Professor and Macdonald Chair	Mathematics and Statistics	McGill University
Ratna Gosh	James McGill Professor and Macdonald Chair	Education	McGill University
Pengfei Guan	Professor and Tier I Canada Research Chair	Mathematics and Statistics	McGill University
Jacques Hurtubise	Professor and Chair	Mathematics and Statistics	McGill University
Daniel Wise	Professor	Mathematics and Statistics	McGill University
Tom Hutchinson	Professor	Medicine	McGill University
Beverley Pearson-Murphy	Professor Emeritus	Medicine	McGill University

Pablo Cervantes	Assistant Professor	Medicine	McGill University
Marc Laporta	Assistant Professor	Medicine	McGill University
Brian Greenfield	Assistant Professor	Medicine	McGill University
Niky Kamran	James McGill Professor	Mathematics and Statistics	McGill University
Abd'ul-Missagh Ghadirian	Professor and Emeritus Physician	Medicine	McGill University
Victoria Talwar	Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair (II)	Educational and Counselling Psychology	McGill University
Nathan Smith	Assistant Professor	Educational and Counselling Psychology	McGill University
Susanne Lajoie	Professor and Canada Research Chair (I)	Educational and Counselling Psychology	McGill University
Shaheen Shariff	Associate Professor	Integrated Studies in Education	McGill University
David Thomas	Professor and Chair	Biochemistry	McGill University
Imed E. Gallouzi	Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Cellular Information Systems	Biochemistry	McGill University
Erika Gisel	Professor Emeritus	Occupational Therapy	McGill University
Gerard Wright	Professor	Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences	McMaster University
Martin Weinstein	Adjunct Professor	Resource and Environmental Management	Simon Fraser University
Michael E.P. Murphy	Professor	Microbiology and Immunology	University of British Columbia
Chris Bauch	Associate Professor	Mathematics and Statistics	University of Guelph
Rob Deardon	Associate Professor	Mathematics and Statistics	University of Guelph
David Petrusek	Associate Professor	Public and International Affairs	University of Ottawa
Valery Chirkov	Associate Professor	Psychology	University of Saskatchewan
Michel Desjardins	Associate Professor	Psychology	University of Saskatchewan

Lea Caragata	Professor	Social Work	Wilfrid Laurier University
Nick Coady	Dean	Social Work	Wilfrid Laurier University
David Doherty	President		Mount Royal University