



Monthly Summary: Iranian Bahá'í Situation of Concern

February 2013

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THE SENTINEL PROJECT FOR GENOCIDE PREVENTION IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO EFFECTIVE **EARLY WARNING OF GENOCIDE** AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES BEFORE LIVES ARE LOST.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH THE CREATIVE **USE OF TECHNOLOGY** AND **COOPERATION WITH THREATENED GROUPS**.

Summary of Incident Types

1. *Polarization Events (sentencing, expulsions, arrest, prison transfer, business closures)*
- These are actions by the government that appear calculated to separate Bahá'í citizens from mainstream Iranian society, thereby weakening their community and socially isolating them to prevent Muslim Iranians from sympathizing with them.
2. Sentence Reduction
3. Update
4. International / Political

Commentary and Analysis

5. Analyst commentary and observations
6. Statistics / Infographics
7. One Month Comparison
8. One Year Comparison.

1. Polarization

Arrest

- Security agents went to the home of Ardeshir Fanaeyan and Shidrokh Firuzeyan on February 12. Their home was searched and computer, religious books, photographs and other personal effects were taken. The two Bahais were transferred to the Semnan Intelligence Ministry headquarters.



Source: [HRANA](#) 13 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-193](#)

- A Bahá'í resident from Isfahan was arrested on February 12th. Agents from the Ministry of Intelligence searched the home of Nava Na'imi confiscating a computer books and personal photos. Nava's whereabouts are currently unknown.



Source: [HRANA](#) 17 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-260](#)

- Five agents from the Ministry of Intelligence, detained and arrested Sana' Ra'uqi as he left his home in Sanandaj (Later reported to be the town of Arak). Sana' was not shown an arrest warrant and was taken to the Ministry of Intelligence in Sanandaj. Sana's wife and father went to the Ministry where they discovered his car however they were unable to contact him

Source: [HRANA](#) 23rd February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-262](#)

Business Closure

- On February 25th nine shops where Bahá'ís were known to work at were closed in Bandar Torkaman (Golestan Province) by authorities. Trading violations were cited as the reason for the closures. Papers citing this offence were posted to



the doors of the businesses closed. It is noteworthy that the shops had paid all of their fees and taxes and inquiries made to the authorities have not cleared up this issue. Most of the stores that were closed were cloth retailers. Under the religious apartheid taking place in Iran Bahais have been barred from many economic sectors like education and the government. What is alarming in this case is that Bahais shopkeepers have been in this industry for the past 20 years without any trading violations. There has been a recent rise in the frequencies of business closures taking place in cities such as Semnan, Shiraz and Hamadan.

Source: [HRANA](#) 7 March 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-263](#)

Detention

- For a number of months now, Bahá'í prisoners in Mashhad have been denied a prison furlough. In Iranian Law it is stated that prisoners that have served more than half of the respective sentences can benefit from a furlough. Rozita Vatheqi, Davur Nabilzadeh Jalayer Vahdat and Sima Eshraqi who are serving 5-year sentences, and Vasanaz Tafazzoli who is serving a 6-year sentence, all satisfy this requirement, but have not been granted leave because of opposition from the Ministry of Intelligence

Source: [HRANA](#) 21 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-265](#)

Sentencing

- Six Bahá'ís who underwent interrogation after search of their homes in July 2012 have been sentenced to 1 year of probation. Each Bahá'í has been charged with propaganda against the regime. The Bahais named are Mehrdad Mahdavi, Ourang Mahdavi, Kamran Sabet, Afsani Majidi, Noghmeh Rezvani and Beharak Saheli

Source: [HRANA](#) 14 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-265](#)

Sentence Beginning

- Taher Eskandariyan (See June and October 2012 reports) was summoned to the Semnan Prison to begin his sentence on February 11. Taher, a Bahá'í from Semnan was previously sentenced to 3 years in prison he joins seven other Bahais in the men's section of Semnan prison on charges of "propaganda against the regime." This will be Taher's second prison sentence he served six months in prison in 2010

Source: [HRANA](#) 14 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-259](#)

- Akbar Por-hoseini (See November and December 2012 Reports) was summoned to begin serving his 18 month sentence. Akbar is charged with propaganda



against the regime and membership of the Bahá’í community. Akbar was given an initial sentence of 26 months that was reduced by the Court of Review eventually. It is also notable that Akbar had his store closed and his entire stock worth 2 billion rials (125,000 euros, 162,000 US) confiscated on November 29th 2012. Akbar was also fined 3.6 billion rials (225,000 euro, 293,000 US) in the aftermath of a secret trial where he was tried in absentia.

Source: [HRANA](#) 19 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-261](#)

Expulsion

- Sepideh Vaziri-Pourhaqiqi and Samir Golshan were expelled from the Kharameh campus of the Payam-e Nour University due to the fact that they were Bahá’í. Both students were in the fourth semester of their studies in Agricultural Engineering. **It's important to note that this is the second instance of an expulsion pertaining to Sepideh Vaziri-Pourhaqiqi found. (See June 2012 Report)** It is currently unclear if this expulsion case is an extension of the prior one or a new expulsion event, which would mean Sepideh was readmitted and expelled again.

Source: [HRANA](#) 15 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-195](#)

- A Bahá’í student of Industrial Engineering was expelled from the University of Science and Technology in Tehran. Panidh Fazl’Ali was discovered the expulsion on February 23rd after unsuccessfully attempting to access his school’s website. The following day he reported to the University’s Office of educational Administration where he was told he was expelled due to his religious beliefs and that the decision was sanctioned by the national body which oversees educational assessments. (the Sanjesh). Panidh was also told that no written evidence of the expulsion would be given. He was reportedly in the sixth term of the program and had excellent grades.

Source: [HRANA](#) 27 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-282](#)

Prison Transfer

- ‘Adel Na’imi was among 20 Bahais arrested early last July in a wave of arrests taking place in Tehran, Mashhad and Shiraz. He was transferred to Evin Prison from block 350 of the jail he was initially in. ‘Adel suffers from diabetes. (our source reports that it is unknown whether ‘Adel has been tried or sentenced.

Source: [PCED](#) 5 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-256](#)

2. Sentence Reduction

- The Review Court in South Khorasan Province has reduced the sentence for Muhammad Nakh'i an 85 year old Bahá'í previously sentenced to three years in prison plus 3 years suspended imprisonment. Muhammad's sentence has been reduced to 1 year in prison with a fine of 6 million rials (360 euros, 500 US dollars). Muhammad has been detained since last May (See May 2012 Report)

Source: [IRN-246](#)

3. Update

- A trial date has been set for seven Bahá'í prisoners from Gorgan and Gonbad in Golestan province. The prisoners were recently transferred to the Raja'i Shahr prison approximately 450 km from their homes on December 22. These Bahá'ís were among 20 Bahais detained in the aftermath of a wave of arrests that took place in Gorgan and Minudasht around October 17th (approximate date)

One of the seven, Kourush Ziari has a leg injury and was unable to walk at all until just a week before his arrest. At the time of his arrest he was receiving physiotherapy

The other six are Siamak Sadri, Fu'ad Fahandezh, Payam Markazi, Fahrmand Sana'i, Farhad Fahandezh and Kamal Kashani. They are held in room 12 of block 4 of Raja'i Shahr prison. Rajai Shahr prison also 'houses' the seven Bahai 'Yaran' (national facilitators) who are now in the fourth year of 20-year sentences for their Bahá'í beliefs.

Source: [HRANA](#) 7 February
Threatwiki Address: [IRN-720](#)

- As reported by HRANA on November 17th 32 businesses with apparent links to Bahá'ís in Hamadan province were closed by authorities with no apparent explanation provided. After the closures the owners and tenants of the businesses queried their local authorities and were told they could re-open if they agreed to keep their stores open on the Bahá'í Holy Day (effectively not observing the date)

In the [Bahai calendar](#): on nine of these, normal work is suspended. In the Islamic lunar calendar, November 16 and 17, 2012 were Muharram 1 and 2, when Bahais in countries using that calendar celebrate the births of the Bab and Baha'u'llah, and close their businesses

The business currently remained closed three months after the fact with no progress towards a solution made. Due to the degree of economic ostracism that the Bahá'í community faces in Iran, the community relies heavily on small service / retail businesses for their livelihood.

Source: [HRANA](#) 18 February 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-721](#)

4. International / Political Events

- Western economic sanctions aimed at stifling Iran's nuclear program have resulted in a sharp decline in Tehran's access to global capital in the last year. A copy of a global economic report acquired by Reuters cited international sanctions and a perceived weakness in the countries investment climate as reasons for the drop. The gross domestic product of Iran is currently falling "possibly by the largest margin in 25 years" according to the report.

Source: [Reuters](#) 7 February 2013

- According to an IRGC Official Iran is purported to have the 4th largest Cyber army in the world. This claim was made by the Supreme Leader's representative for the IRGC Brigadier General Mohammad Hossein Saeedi. It is unclear how accurate these claims are but they did get some corroboration from Israel's Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), a think tank that has recognized Iran as one of the most advanced countries in terms of Cyberwarfare. An article published by the INSS identified several defensive goals formulated by the Iranian Regime where technology is concerned. First is the establishment of a technological "envelope" designed for the protection of critical infrastructure and sensitive information. A second is to stop and foil cyberactivity by opposition elements and other opponents of the Iranian regime.

Source: [Fars News Agency](#) 2 February 2013

- The Government of Iran has dismissed a report from UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran claiming the document was unsubstantiated, biased and a repetition of western allegations aimed at Iran. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ramin Mehmanparast decried the methods by which the report was produced, claiming that Ahmed Shaheed "collates" the information he gathers. He also expressed regret for the report's publication claiming that it undermines the UN's system of human rights protection and lacks legal credibility. Mohammad Saleh Jokar, a member in the Majlis National security and Foreign Policy Committee stated that the report was "prejudiced" and accused Ahmed Shaheed of rehashing Washington's Iranophobia.

Source: [Press TV](#)

- The President of Iran's National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) has called out to France as well as the European Union to officially "recognize the Iranian resistance" in the same manner the resistance in Syria has received some degree of recognition. In a speech to the National Assembly, Maryam Rajavi stated the following. "The biggest political mistake of the West is ignoring a key movement for change in Iran. A resistance has deep roots in Iranian society with a democratic coalition of various opposition groups and more 50% (sic) of



women... The International sanctions are positive. But they will only be effective if the West changes its policy towards resistance."

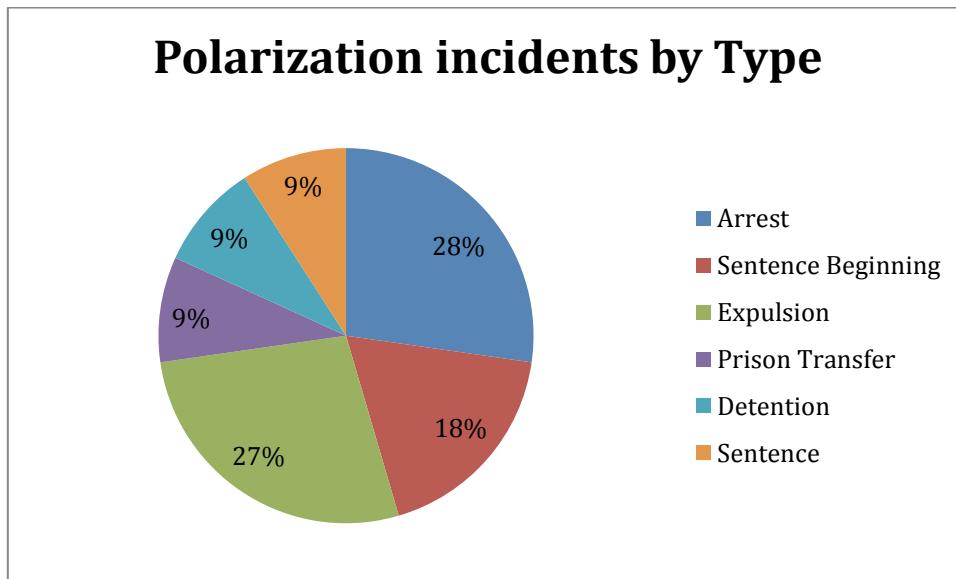
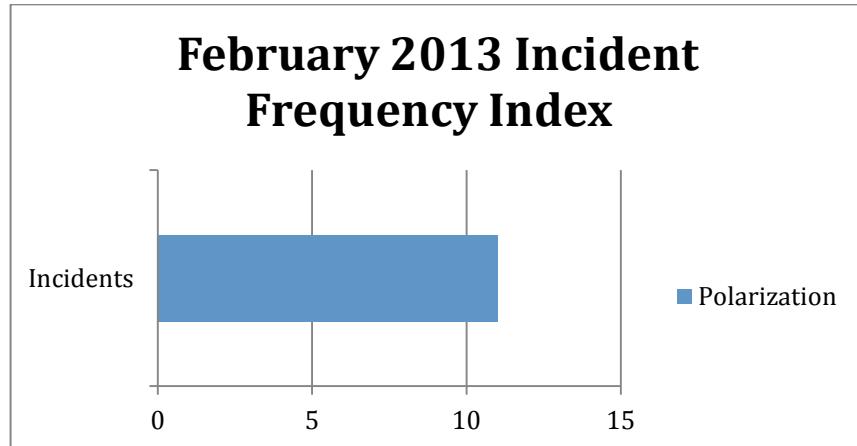
Source: Legifaro.fr (via Why We Protest.net) 2 February 2013

5. Commentary and Analysis

The issue concerning cyber warfare / espionage in Iran is a very complex case. The reason for this is that Iran has been subject to a series of sophisticated cyber based attacks. Most recently the Stuxnet virus attack on at least one their nuclear facilities. It was recently revealed that there were more [versions](#) of the Stuxnet virus that were not yet released. The reality of these attacks is unfortunate as it presents a legitimate case for the Iranian regime, to narrow their digital borders. (Similarly analysis and conclusions were made in our May 2012 report.) With respect to civil society and human rights activists working with and within the country, this presents an encroaching impediment, as the Iranian regime is likely to use these attacks as a pretext to limit the efforts of civil society as well as the opposition in Iran. The recent revelations of the NSA spying scandal are likely to exacerbate this scenario, as a collective of likeminded countries have been revealed their intent to create a global "non-western" [internet variant](#). This trend may embolden efforts to carry out much of the same within Iran. This turn of events, serves as a reminder of how human rights and human security are both unseen causalities of rigid national security agendas both inside the Middle East and in the West. In light of this early warning, monitoring and mitigation would benefit, from a nuanced appreciation of these trends, so that the planning of appropriate contingencies are responsive, secure and tailored to synchronize coordination between regional and international levels.

News this month that Iran's formal opposition has requested some measure of international recognition, is timely and reflects the ongoing crisis unfolding in Syria. This request, indicates the dire conditions within Iran facing the opposition, and the lack of democratic due process. Although the level of violence in Iran is not at the level currently unfolding in Syria, the processes unfolding in both countries and their mutual political fates are firmly intertwined.

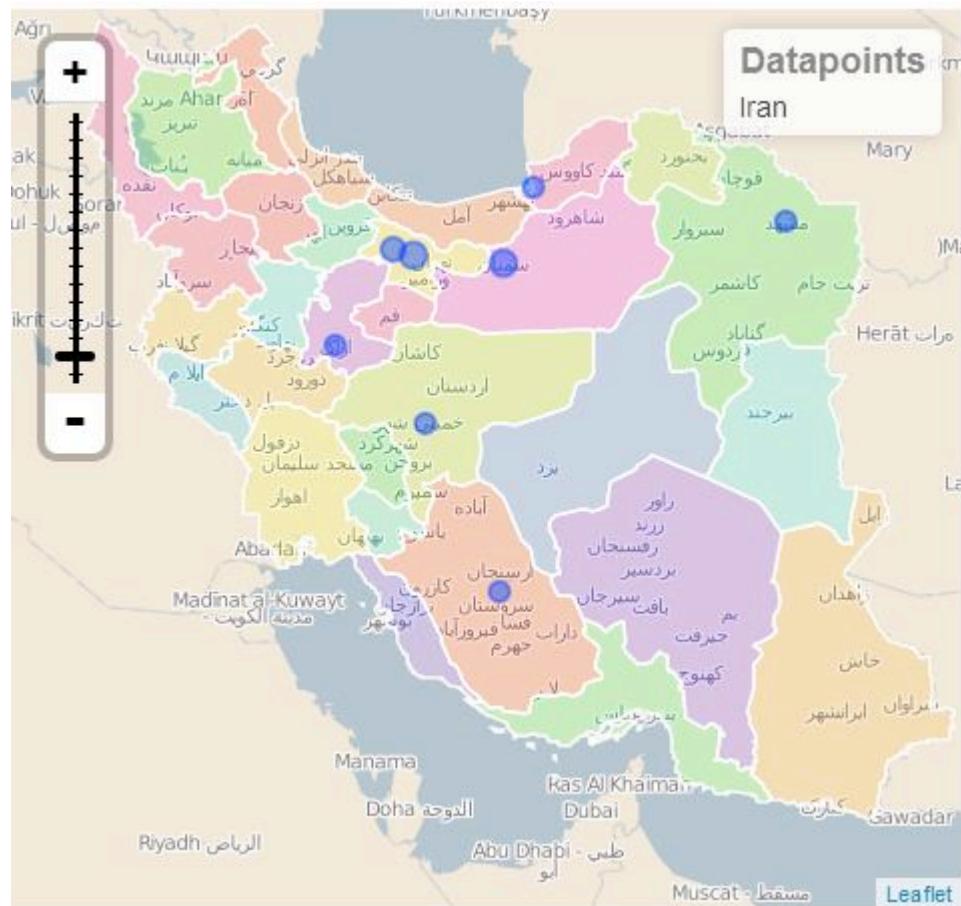
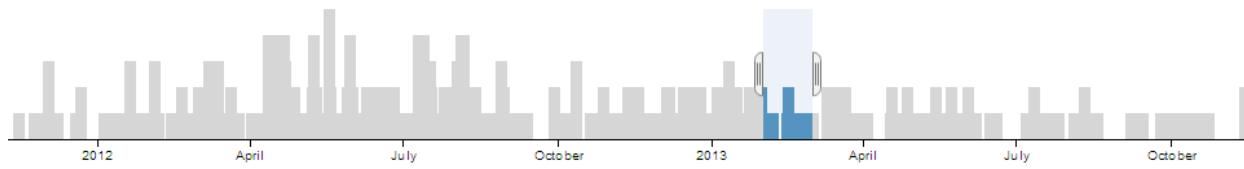
6. Statistics and Graphics





THE SENTINEL PROJECT FOR GENOCIDE PREVENTION

February 03, 2013 to February 27, 2013



Province/Region/City	Events Recorded	Event Type
Arak	1 Event	Polarization/Arrest
Isfahan	1 Event	Polarization/Arrest
Kherameh	1 Event	Polarization/Expulsion
Karaj	2 Events (IRN-256 / 257)	Polarization/Prison Transfer Polarization/Sentencing
Tehran	2 Events (IRN-195 / 282)	Polarization/Expulsion Polarization/Expulsion



Semnan	3 Events (IRN-193/ 259 / 261)	Polarization / Arrest Polarization / Sentence Beginning Polarization / Sentence Beginning
Bandar Torkaman	1 Events (IRN-263)	Polarization/ Business Closure
Mashhad	1 Event (IRN-265)	Polarization Detention

7. One Month Comparison

Incident Frequency and Typology

	February 2013	January 2013
Operating Process Factors (8 Stage Model of Genocide)	Polarization (Stage 5)	Classification (Stage 1) Polarization (Stage 5)
Frequency	Polarization - 11 Events	Classification - 1 Event Polarization - 14 Events (+3)

Most and Least Polarization Incidents by Type

	February 2013	January 2013
Most Frequent Occurrence	Arrest - 3 Events (28%)	Arrest - 5 Events (28%)
Least Frequent Occurrence	Sentencing/Detention/Prison Transfer - 1 Event each (9%)	

8. One Year Comparison

Incident Frequency and Typology

	February 2013	February 2012
Operating Process Factors (8 Stage Model of Genocide)	Polarization (Stage 5)	Classification (Stage 1) Polarization (Stage 5) Preparation (Stage 7)
Frequency	Polarization - 11 Events	Classification - 1 Event Polarization - 15 Events Preparation - 1 Event

Most and Least Polarization Incidents by Type

	February 2013	February 2012
Most Frequent Occurrence	Arrest - 3 Events (28%)	Expulsion - 5 Events (33%)
Least Frequent Occurrence	Sentencing/Detention/Prison Transfer - 1 Event each (9%)	Business Closure - 1 Event (6%)