



THE SENTINEL PROJECT
FOR GENOCIDE PREVENTION

Monthly Summary: Iranian Bahá'í Situation of Concern

March 2013

Latest Update: September 26th 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 (Arrest, Harassment, Summons, Trial Prison Prison Conditions, Prison Transfer, Detention, Health Condition)* - 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. Update / Release on Bail
3. International / Political

Commentary and Analysis

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



1. Polarization

Arrest

- It was reported by Iran Daily Brief that security agents in the province of Semnan under the approval of the Ministry of Education arrested four Bahá'í students without the knowledge of their respective families. The agents went to two Semnan High Schools, Shahid Behesti and Amir Kabir where the students were arrested in the middle of the school day. The students are named Sina Fenaeyan, Armin Allah Vardi, Ramin, Amiri, and Yunes Khanjani. The Bahá'í Students were removed from the school property mid-lesson arrested and then taken to the intelligence headquarters. The students were held and interrogated for several hours. The students were asked whether they knew about Ardeshir Fenaeyan, a Bahai arrested in Semnan February 12. The students were also given threats and promises that spying on Bahá'ís would continue in Semnan. The students were eventually released after their interrogation

Source: [Iran Daily Brief](#) 7 March 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-264](#)

- A Bahá'í from Semnan, Golrokh Firuzeyan was arrested after a court appearance on the 9th of March. She was later taken to the Ministry of Intelligence. The Ministry has also been holding Golrokh's sister Shidrock hostage in addition to threatening the safety of her family who also reside in Semnan. (See Harassment)

Source: [HRANA](#) 12 March 2012

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-269](#)

- A Bahá'í couple from Isfahan, Aravar Qutbi-Anvari and Arman Anvari were arrested on the 18th of March. The couple was released on the 25th of March after having legal documents legal documents provided for bail. There are no further details regarding this incident.

Source: [HRANA](#) 7 April 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-278](#)

- Two Bahá'í women from Gorgan, Mona Amri and Rufeya Pakzadan were arrested at their residence on the morning of March 18th. Their whereabouts are currently unknown.

Source: [HRANA](#) 18 March 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-272](#)

Harassment

- In the 24 days following the arrest of Shidrokh Firuzeyan her, (a Bahá'í from Semnan and sister to Golrokh Firuzeyan) next of kin have been repeatedly harassed with telephone calls from the Ministry of Intelligence, who have



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claimed they would hold Shidrokh hostage until their other daughter Golrokh reported to the Ministry of Intelligence in Semnan. The family was told that if Golrokh failed to report to the Ministry, her sister would be held in detention and the security of their family “could not be guaranteed” It is important to note that Golrokh lives in Tehran 200 KM away from Semnan

Source: [HRANA](#) 8 March 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-267](#)

Summons

- Six Bahais previously associated with the Bahai Open University (BIHE) were summoned for a court appearance on May 12th. The Bahais named are Azita Rafi`zadeh, Peyman Kushkabaghi, Nazanin Niku-Sarasht, Nasim Baqeri, Talu` Golkar and Ahmad Golzadeh

Source: [HRANA](#) 11 March 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-268](#)

Trial

- Ten Bahais previously associated with the Bahá'í Open University (BIHE) appeared before the Public Prosecutors office in Tehran on March 12 it was previously reported that that only six had been summoned for trial (see Summons) Four additional Bahais named are Babak Beheshti, 'Abas Ta'ef, Hasan Momtaz & Negin Baqueri. After the presentation of their defence they were released on bail.

Source: [PCED](#) 12 March 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-270](#)

Prison Transfer

- Two Bahai women living in Gorgan were arrested on March 18th they are named Mona Amri Hesari and Rufeya Pakzadan. The women were charged and upon a Judge's orders transferred to the Amir Abad prison in Gorgan. Mona and Rufeya are reportedly the only Bahá'ís currently imprisoned at Gorgan.

Source [CHRR](#) 20 March 2013

Threatwiki Address: [IRN-273](#)

Detention/ Prison Conditions / Health Conditions

- Navid Khanjani, founder of Campaign against Educational Discrimination (PCED) and Bahai Human Rights Activist was severely assaulted by prison wards at Tehran's Evin Prison. Navid is serving a 12 year sentence on the charges of spreading propaganda, disturbing public opinion, propaganda against the regime as a result of reports and interviews of foreign media membership of



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the Central Committee of the CHRR (Committee of Human Rights Reporters) and his founding of the PCED. Navid was summoned to the Revolutionary Court in Tehran when he refused to wear a prisoner's uniform he was physically assaulted. The reason for his summons is unknown

Source: [PCED](#) 13 March 2013
Threatwiki Address: [IRN-271](#)

- Behfar Khanjani is a Bahá'í from Semnan currently serving a four-year sentence. Behfar has suffering from a medical condition for a few years, despite this the prosecutor and state-appointed physician has denied permission for him to receive treatment. It has been reported that Behfar's condition has been worsened due to the stress incurred from his 2 years of imprisonment as well as the lack of a suitable environment. Behfar has only been permitted a few days of leave from prison.

Behfar's sentence is being served for charges of membership of illegal Bahá'í groups, attending Bahá'í prayer meetings and the 19th day feast. Behfar's arrest occurred back on January 6th 2010 following a search of his home by Ministry of Intelligence agents. It is notable that Behfar was the target of two arson attacks upon his home. He was among a group Bahá'ís who were pressured for interviews on television last December (see December 2012 report). During Behfar's incarceration his wife and sister were also interrogated.

Source: [Sad Nameh ta Azadeh \(blog\)](#) 24 March 2013
Threatwiki Address: [IRN-274](#)

- Pressures facing Bahá'í prisoners have ramped up recently. Efforts made to raise this issue to the Ministry of Intelligence by the families of the imprisoned have been to no avail. Bahá'í prisoners are forbidden access to the prison yard, library, gymnasium, prison shop, telephone and contact with other prisoners. The denial of Bahá'ís telephone privileges were made on the orders of security officials. The restriction applied to the Bahá'í prisoners have been carried out in a discriminatory manner to such an extent that their families have described them as a violation of their human dignity and civil rights.

Source: [PCED](#) 31 March 2013
Threatwiki Address: [IRN-277](#)

Update/ Release on bail

- Two Bahá'í sisters Nika and Nava Khalusi have been freed on bail following 185 days of temporary detention in Mashhad. The sisters were detained by security forces September 26th and held for two months by orders of the Ministry of



Intelligence before a transfer to Vakil Abad prison. Bail has been set at 3 billion rials

Source: [HRANA](#) 31 March 2012

International/Political

- The Iranian Government has denounced a recent report from the UN special rapporteur on Human Rights for Iran, claiming the document was unsubstantiated, biased and a repetition of Western allegations targeting Tehran. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ramin Mehmanparast accused Ahmed Shaheed of collating the information used for his reports from anti-Iranian media outlets as well as terrorist groups. Mehmanparast shared his disappointment over the report claiming that it undermines the UN system of human rights and lacks legal credibility.

Source: [Press TV \(Iran\)](#) 2 March 2013

- According to a top US commander sanctions levelled at Iran are not working as intended. General James Mattis head of US central command warned that it may be possible to use sanctions and other means to pressure Tehran to come “to its senses” Mattis speculated that Iran could be using the ongoing rounds of negotiations to buy time. He went on to state the following

“That should not be in any way construed as we should not negotiate. I still support the direction we’re taking...I’m just - I’m paid to take a rather dim view of Iranians frankly”

Mattis’ assessment coincides with a climate of international scepticism surrounding the purported purpose Iran’s enrichment programs. Where Tehran insists upon the peaceful use of nuclear technology the international consensus tends to suspect that Iran has more aggressive motives (i.e. building atomic weaponry) The head of the UN nuclear agency stated that it could not be guaranteed that Iran’s intentions were peaceful unless Tehran became more cooperative and they allowed inspectors access to sites where it is suspected work on nuclear weapons are taking place.

Source: [Associated Press \(Via the Green Voice of Freedom\)](#) 6 March 2013

- The Head of the Iranian Qods force was accused of providing military aid to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad by US officials. The leader of the Qods force has expressed concerns that the Syrian dictator cannot win the civil conflict occurring in Syria. In comments made to the semi-official Fars News Agency (affiliated with the IRGC) Major General Qasem Soleimani stated that if the Syrian Regime had commanders similar to the IRGC and Basij leaders it would



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be “insured” against “incursions” Iranian government officials reject western claims that Iran is sending military and financial aid (including weapons) to the embattled Syrian regime, the country’s sole ally in the region.

Source: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#) 2 March 2013

- The Bahá’í Universal House of Justice issued a statement regarding the political status and engagement of Bahá’ís. The statement reaffirms the Bahá’í commitment to peace, ecumenism and societal change through peaceful processes. The statement issued also affirmed the Bahá’í commitment to not seek political leadership positions (save for administrative roles only) and denounced any impression that the community was dedicated to the forceful overthrow of any sitting regime. The statement was made to guide the conduct and spiritual teaching of Bahá’ís in whatever countries they may find themselves in the world. The recurring theme of the document was the emphasis of harmony and tact when dealing with any government and other cultures.

Source: [Sen McGlenn \(Blog\)](#) 2 March 2013

- After negotiations with Iran’s assembly of experts and the Permanent 5 +1 in Almaty Kazakstan, the Ayatollah Khomeini alleged that “the West did not do anything important for it to be interpreted as a concession but rather they confessed to some of the rights of the nation of Iran” previously it had been reported through most Western media that Western nations offered to lift some sanctions on the condition that Iran scale back their nuclear activities. Khomeini went on further stating that “to measure the honesty of the West at the latest meeting with Iran, we must wait until the next session” A statement that could imply some points of progress or significance were discussed. Commenting on the sanctions on Iran Khomeini claimed that only some of the county’s economic problems are related to the sanctions the rest were domestic problems that could be fixed.

Source: [Al-Monitor](#) 8 March 2013

- A request was made by the **Justice for Iran** to the European Union to apply diplomatic pressure on the Iranian Republic of Iran regarding anti Bahá’í persecution involving 15 prominent officials heavily active in the persecution of the Bahá’í community.

Named violators of the educational rights of Bahá’ís	Named violators of the judicial rights of Bahá’ís	The violators of the professional rights of Bahá’ís include:	The violators of the human rights of Bahá’ís in the media context include:
Asghar Zarei, Hakam Ali Najafi, Seyed Jalaeddin Tabatabaei,	Hojat-al-Islam Mohammad Qasem Eynolkamali	Major General Mohammad Ali Najafi (Commander of the Army of the	Hossein Shariatmadari (Editor-in-Chief of Keyhan



Seyed Morteza Nourbakhsh	Abbas Alizadeh (Movahed) Seyed Reza Mousavi Tabar Masoud Velayati (Ma'azallahi) Hojat-al-Islam Asadollah Jafari	Guardians of the Islamic Revolution) Major General Seyed Hassan Firouzabadi (Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces) Seyed Mohammad Reza Mavalizadeh	Newspaper) Hamid Reza Moghaddam Far Meysam Nili
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Commentary and Analysis

5. Analyst Observations

Longstanding trends of persecution against the Bahá'í continue this month, most notably with the continuance of arbitrary arrests and the denial of education.

As seen this month, Bahá'ís are still subject to arbitrary arrests, short term detention, persistent harassment, and other forms of intimidation and discrimination. Government sanctioned surveillance remains an issue, and has been ongoing since 2005. A letter dated 29 October 2005 from Basij Major General Dr. Seyyed Hossein Firuzabad, Chairman of the Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces, outlined “a mission to acquire a comprehensive and complete report of all the activities of these sects (including political, economic, social and cultural) for the purpose of identifying all the individuals of these misguided sects”. Asma Jahangir, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, expressed concern not long after that “the information gained as a result of such monitoring will be used as a basis for the increased persecution of, and discrimination against, members of the Bahá'í Faith”.

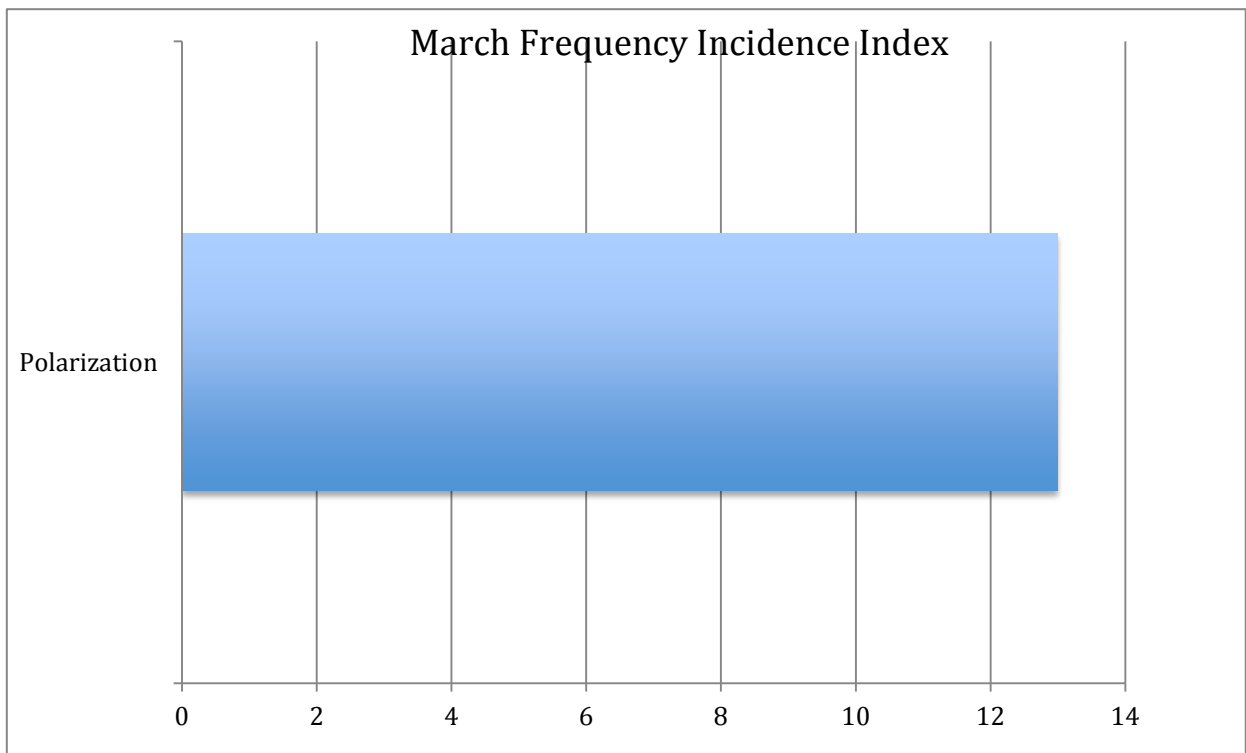
The continued denial of education, related to the targeted arrests of students, is also troubling. As The Bahá'í International Community writes: “The efforts of the Iranian government to deny Bahá'ís the right to education can only be seen as a coordinated effort to eradicate the Bahá'í community as a viable group within Iranian society”. Proof of this can be seen in the 1991 ‘Bahá'í Question’ document, distributed in 1992, which states that Bahá'ís “must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Bahá'ís”. The



memorandum further directs that Bahá'ís will be allowed to go to school only if they do not identify themselves as Bahá'ís. The measures in the letter essentially dictate that Bahá'ís should be kept illiterate and uneducated, living only at a subsistence level. Its central focus is a call for Iran's Bahá'ís to be treated in such a way "that their progress and development shall be blocked".

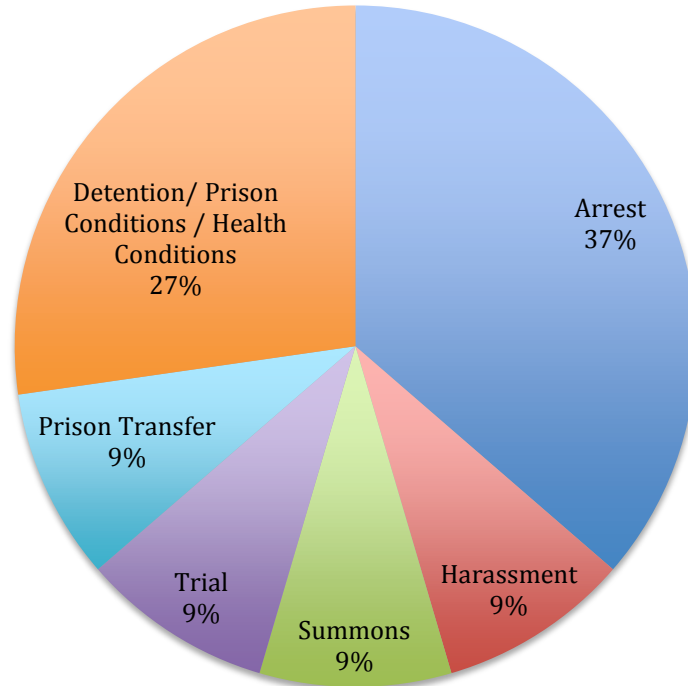
The Bahá'ís - both within Iran, and at the international level - continue to attempt to show the lack of threat they pose to the Iranian government, as evidenced this month by the Universal House of Justice's affirmation of peaceful processes and non-political behaviour. Iran's nuclear programme continues to dominate its discussion with other governments, overshadowing the treatment of Bahá'ís. However, global civil society actors concerned for Bahá'ís continue to advocate for pressure to be put on Iran, in hopes that the situation might improve.

6. Statistics and Graphs





Polarization Incidents by Type

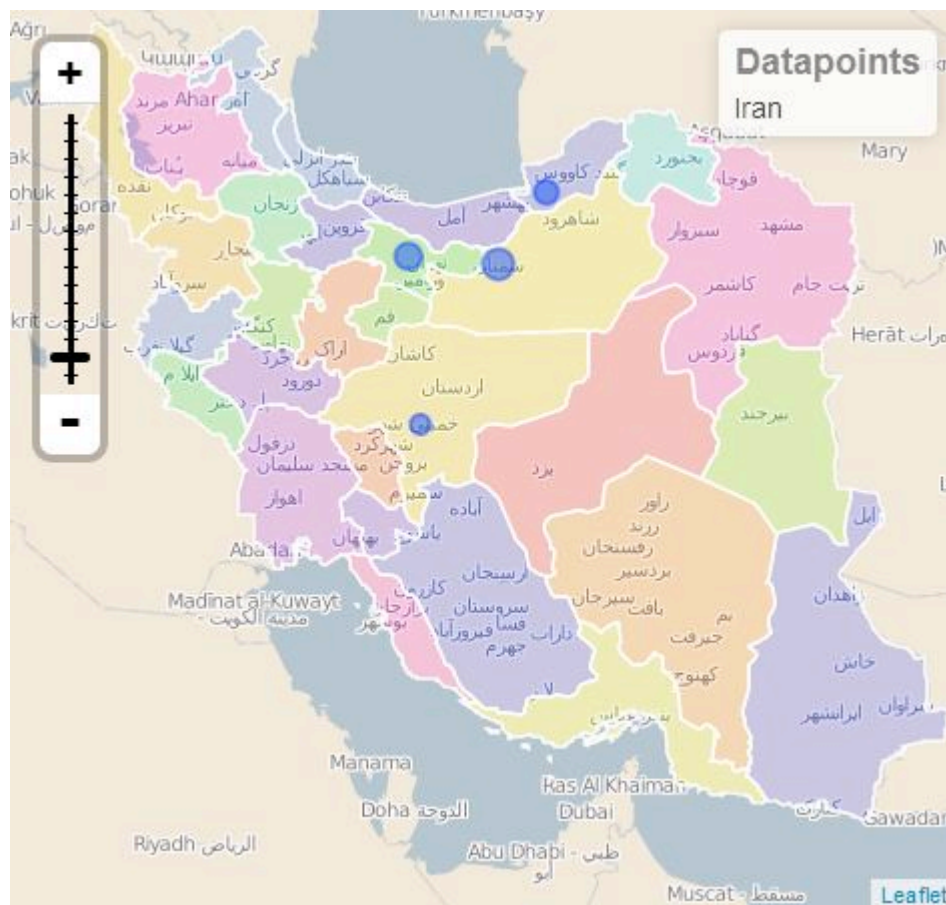




Regional Incident Index

March 2013 Regional Threatwiki Visualization

March 07, 2013 to March 31, 2013



Province/Region/City	Events Recorded	Event Type
Gorgan	2 Events (IRN-272/273)	Polarization/Arrest Polarization/Prison Transfer / Release on Bail
Tehran	3 Events (IRN 271/270/286)	Polarization/Prison Conditions Polarization/ Trial Polarization / Sentence



		Beginning
Semnan	5 Events (IRN 277/274/269/267/264)	Polarization / Detention & Prison Conditions Polarization/Detention & Health Conditions Polarization/Arrest Polarization/Harassment Polarization/Arrest
Isfahan	1 Event (IRN 278)	Polarization/Arrest & Release on Bail

8. One Month Comparison
Incident Frequency and Typology

	February 2013	March 2013
Operating Process Factors (8 Stage Model of Genocide)	Polarization (Stage 5) Preparation (Stage 6)	Polarization (Stage 5)
Frequency	Polarization - 16 events Preparation - 1 event	Polarization - 10 events

Polarization Incidents by Type

	February 2013	March 2013
Most Frequent Occurrence	Arrest (44%)	Arrest (37%)
Least Frequent Occurrence	Raids/Arrests (6%)	Harassment, Trails, Prison Transfer, Summons - 9% each

9. One Year Comparison.
Incident Frequency and Typology

	March 2012	March 2013
Operating Process Factors (8 Stage Model of	Polarization (Stage 5) Preparation (Stage 6)	Polarization (Stage 5)



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Genocide)		
Frequency	Polarization - 16 events Preparation - 1 event	Polarization - 10 events

Polarization Incidents by Type

	March 2012	March 2013
Most Frequent Occurrence	Detention (25%)	Arrest (37%)
Least Frequent Occurrence	Questioning & Sentence Confirmation (6%)	Harassment, Trails, Prison Transfer, Summons - 9% each