



# BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

## OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2015

Contact: Rachel Wolfe

Office: (202) 833-8990, Cell: (202) 643-2735, Email: [USBahaiMedia@usbnc.org](mailto:USBahaiMedia@usbnc.org)

### **Baha'is to testify on Human Rights in Iran at Congressional Hearing**

WASHINGTON — Anthony Vance, the Director of Public Affairs of the Baha'is of the United States, will testify at a hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, entitled "The Shame of Iranian Human Rights," which will take place at 2:00 pm on Thursday, February 26 in room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington D.C.

This will be a joint hearing held by the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, chaired by Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), and the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa. In describing the hearing, Chairman Smith [states](#): "[W]itnesses will testify about the current **Iranian Government's horrific human rights record**, which includes killings, unlawful imprisonments and torture, and the refusal to respect the basic freedoms of speech, assembly and religion."

Vance's testimony will describe the theological, social, and historical reasons for Iran's systematic persecution of Baha'is, from the birth of the religion in mid-nineteenth century Shiraz to the present-day. Currently, **there are some one hundred Baha'i prisoners of conscience in Iran**. Thousands more have been harassed, arrested, and detained. Baha'i students are denied entry into universities and Baha'i businesses are shut down. Baha'i properties and cemeteries have been vandalized and destroyed.

Vance will also **highlight recent increases in hate propaganda against Baha'is**. According to the Baha'i International Community, in the first nine months of 2014, over 3,500 articles and video clips inciting hatred against the Baha'is were circulated in a wide range of print and online media. On average, this represents an **increase of more than 1,700%** over [the number reported in 2011](#).

Finally, Vance will emphasize Iran's upcoming appearance at the 28<sup>th</sup> regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, taking place in Geneva this March. At this meeting, Iran must report on its [progress](#) in extending the protection of human rights to all its citizens. The Iranian government made strong commitments during the 2014 UNHRC Universal Periodic Review of its human rights record. Independent reports confirm, however, that Iran has not

BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

followed through on these promises. In fact, in the case of the Baha'is, the situation has [deteriorated](#).

To watch the hearing live or after it has concluded, and to obtain copies of witness testimony, visit: <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing/subcommittee-hearing-shame-iranian-human-rights>.

For additional information, please contact the U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs at (202) 833-8990, or visit: <http://publicaffairs.bahai.us>.