



BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Panel discussion and showing of film on human rights in Iran

WASHINGTON — On Thursday, March 12, the Baha'ís of the United States will hold a special event on Capitol Hill focusing on the situation of human rights in Iran. The event will take place in the Capitol Visitor Center's South Congressional Meeting Room at 5:30 pm.

The event will begin with a showing of journalist and filmmaker Maziar Bahari's new documentary film, *To Light a Candle*, which provides a powerful account of the story of Iran's Baha'i community, a religious minority that has overcome severe persecution to educate its youth, who are excluded from the nation's universities because of their religion. The film exposes the intolerance and egregious abuses of Iran's government, while also shining a light on the resilience of an imperiled community in its quest to educate and empower itself.

Following the showing, there will be a panel discussion with experts on human rights in Iran. The panel will feature Dokhi Fassihian, Senior Program Manager for Iran at Freedom House; Anthony Vance, Director of the U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs; and Dr. Roya Boroumand, Executive Director of the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation. The discussion will be moderated by Geneive Abdo, Middle East Fellow at the Stimson Center.

The panel will focus on the deepening human rights crisis in Iran, which has been marked by persecution of ethnic and religious minorities – including Baha'ís and others – discrimination against women, crackdowns on journalists, targeting of human rights activists and lawyers, and restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, among other violations. The panel will also examine the deterioration of the human rights situation in the year-and-half since Hassan Rouhani, Iran's new and self-styled reformist President, has taken power.

The panelists will discuss ongoing civil society and international governmental efforts to improve the situation, including at the upcoming March session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, at which Iran's rights record will be on the agenda. The panelists will also discuss steps that Congress and others in the U.S. can take to spotlight human rights violations in Iran and to help protect the rights of all Iranians.

The program will be followed by a reception with refreshments.

For additional information, please contact the U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs at (202) 833-8990.