

## **Schnellrecherche der SFH-Länderanalyse vom 12. Dezember 2016 zu Iran: Verfolgung von Mitgliedern der Gruppe Erfan-e Halgheh (Interuniversalismus)**

Fragen an die SFH-Länderanalyse:

- Was ist die Doktrin der Gruppe *Erfan-e Halgheh* (Interuniversalismus)?
- Was ist über Mohammad Ali Taheri, den Gründer von *Erfan-e Halgheh*, bekannt?
- Wie findet der Unterricht bei *Erfan-e Halgheh* statt? Wie tauschen sich die Mitglieder untereinander aus?
- Wie steht die iranische Regierung zu *Erfan-e Halgheh*?
- Warf die Verhaftung von Mohammad Ali Taheri hohe mediale Wellen?
- Was ist bekannt über Festnahmen von Mitgliedern von *Erfan-e Halgheh* aufgrund ihrer Tätigkeit?
- Was ist bekannt über Aufrufe betreffend der Freilassung von Mohammad Ali Taheri seitens seiner Anhänger? Wann und wo haben diese Aufrufe stattgefunden? Wie sind sie abgelaufen? Gibt es in diesem Zusammenhang Berichte über Demonstrationen vor dem Evin-Gefängnis, wo er inhaftiert sein soll?
- Ist etwas bekannt über Unterschriftensammelaktionen für Mohammad Ali Taheris Freilassung? Wann und wo haben diese stattgefunden?

Die Informationen beruhen auf einer zeitlich begrenzten Recherche (Schnellrecherche) in öffentlich zugänglichen Dokumenten, die uns derzeit zur Verfügung stehen.

Weyermannsstrasse 10  
Postfach 8154  
CH-3001 Bern

T ++41 31 370 75 75  
F ++41 31 370 75 00

info@fluechtlingshilfe.ch  
www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch

Spendenkonto  
PC 30-1085-7

### **1 Erfan-e Halgheh**

***Erfan-e Halgheh* als spirituelle Doktrin oder mystische Weltanschauung.** Gemäss einem Bericht von *IRB Canada* vom 6. November 2013, der eine Vielzahl von Quellen zitiert, handelt es sich bei *Erfan-e Halgheh* (weitere Schreibweisen: *Erfan(e) Halgheh*, *Erfan-e Halqeh*, *Erfan-e Kayhani* oder *Erfan Kaihan*; auch bekannt als «Interuniversalismus», «interuniversaler Mystizismus», «Mystizismus des Ringes» oder «Kosmischer Mystizismus») um eine spirituelle Doktrin, eine mystische Weltanschauung, einen Mystizismus, eine Philosophie, eine Denkrichtung oder eine Glaubensstruktur. Gemäss im IRB-Bericht zitierten Quellen basiert *Erfan-e Halgheh* auf einer Verbindung mit der Intelligenz, die das Universum regiere. Diese Verbindung laufe über «Kreise», die wie spirituelle Werkzeuge handelten. Jeder Kreis habe einen definierten Zweck und tue etwas Einzigartiges. Die Einsichten von *Erfan-e Halgheh* entsprächen ferner dem Rahmen des iranischen Sufismus (Mystizismus). Er untersuche die mysti-



schen Konzepte sowohl in der Theorie als auch in der Praxis in Bezug auf alle Menschen; daher könne jede und jeder unabhängig von Rasse, Nationalität, Religion und persönlichem Glauben die Theorien von *Erfan-e Halgheh* empfangen und akzeptieren und von dessen praktischen Seiten profitieren. Die praktische Seite von *Erfan* (Mystizismus) basiere darauf, eine Verbindung zu den verschiedenen Kreisen (*Halgheh*) des «Kosmischen Bewusstseins» herzustellen, durch die sich ein ganzer Pfad von Erforschung und Transformation öffne und im täglichen Leben anwendbar werde.

Anhängerinnen und Anhänger von *Erfan-e Halgheh* glauben gemäss mehrerer im IRB-Bericht zitierter Quellen, das Universum habe eine qualitative und eine quantitative Seite; sie beschäftigten sich mit ersterer. Sie glaubten, ein grosser Teil der Existenz stehe mit Dingen in Verbindung, die «hinter dem Vorhang passierten». *Erfan-e Halgheh* sei in ihrer Vorstellung der Weg, diesen Vorhang zu öffnen. Sie sähen *Erfan-e Halgheh* nicht als Widerspruch zu traditionellen Glaubensrichtungen, allerdings hielten einige Anhänger den Gründer Mohammad Ali Taheri für einen Propheten.

**Untergeordnete Philosophien: *Faradarmani* und *Psymentology*.** *Faradarmani* und *Psymentology* sind laut dem IRB-Bericht vom 6. November 2013 zwei untergeordnete Glaubenssysteme oder Philosophien des *Erfan-e Halgheh*, die als therapeutische oder Heilpraktiken beschrieben werden. *Faradarmani* konzentrierte sich auf das Gebet oder eine Art Meditation oder Bewusstsein als ein Mittel, um Wohlbefinden zu erlangen, und schliesse eine Zurückweisung der modernen Medizin ein. *Psymentology* sei eine metaholistische Wissenschaft von Geist und Seele.

**Gründung von *Erfan-e Halgheh* in Iran durch Mohammad Ali Taheri.** *Erfan-e Halgheh* wurde gemäss dem IRB-Bericht vom 6. November 2013 durch Mohammad Ali Taheri in Iran gegründet. Gemäss eigener Behauptung habe er 1978 «göttliche Inspirationen» erhalten. Auf dem Höhepunkt seiner Karriere im Jahr 2008 habe er ein beeindruckendes Netzwerk von Seminaren und informellen «Therapiegruppen» in städtischen Zentren in Iran und im Ausland geleitet. Laut dem IRB-Bericht gilt Taheri als formeller Anführer der Anhänger von *Erfan-e Halgheh*. Die formelle Struktur der Gruppe sei von Anhängern ausserhalb Irans aufgebaut worden, und Taheri habe auch versucht, akademische Institutionen ausserhalb Irans zum Studium seiner Heilpraktiken aufzubauen.

**Unterricht und Kurse für neue Mitglieder, Seminare und «Therapiegruppen».** Laut dem IRB-Bericht werden die Vorstellungen, denen die Gruppe anhängt, neuen Mitgliedern nicht sofort zugänglich gemacht. Eine zukünftige Anhängerin/ein zukünftiger Anhänger müsse einen Prozess durchlaufen, um diese Informationen zu erhalten. Sie/er werde nach einigen Jahren zur Trainerin/zum Trainer ernannt. Gemäss einer weiteren von IRB zitierten Kontaktperson gebe es acht Hauptkurse und drei zusätzliche Kurse, die Anhängerinnen und Anhänger besuchen könnten. Sobald sie den fünften Kurs beendet hätten, könnten sie sich als Trainerinnen/Trainer bewerben, um die Kurse für andere zu leiten. Ausserdem würden Seminare und informelle «Therapiegruppen» abgehalten.

**Mitglieder halten ihre Mitgliedschaft meist geheim, negative Wahrnehmung durch den iranischen Klerus und konservative Muslime.** Gemäss im IRB-Bericht

zitierten Quellen wird *Erfan-e Halgheh* von der iranischen Gesellschaft positiv angesehen, jedoch für gefährlich gehalten, und die Menschen in Iran folgen den Aktivitäten heimlich. Auch gäben die Leute auch im Ausland meist nicht ihren richtigen Namen an, wenn sie über diese Doktrin sprächen. Viele konservative Muslime, die die iranische Regierung unterstützten, hätten eine negative Wahrnehmung neuer und alternativer spiritueller Praktiken und es gebe eine dokumentierte Geschichte der Gewalt gegen diese Gruppen, die von lokalen Klerikern angeregt würde, wobei es nicht klar sei, ob solche Gewalt auch gegen *Erfan-e Halgheh* ausgeübt würde. Religionsbehörden haben laut anderen im IRB-Bericht zitierten Quellen speziell *Erfan-e Halgheh* angeprangert. Dies sei von mit dem Staat in Verbindung stehenden schiitischen Religionsbehörden ausgegangen. Ausserdem gebe es negative Darstellungen von *Erfan-e Halgheh* in den staatlichen Medien.

## 2 Verfolgung Taheris und seiner Anhängerinnen und Anhänger

**Verbot von *Erfan-e Halgheh* in Iran, Festnahmen, Inhaftierung und Folter von Taheri und seinen Anhängerinnen und Anhängern durch staatliche Behörden.** Im IRB-Bericht zitierte Quellen gaben an, *Erfan-e Halgheh* werde von den staatlichen Behörden in Iran als Kult und Schwindel angesehen. Laut einer Kontaktperson von IRB war 2013 ein Gesetzesentwurf zum Verbot von *Erfan-e Halgheh* in Iran hängig. Die *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* bezeichnet *Erfan-e Halgheh* in einem Bericht vom 20. Juni 2016 als verbotene Organisation. Der iranische Sicherheitsapparat behandelt Taheri und Anhängerinnen und Anhänger von *Erfan-e Halgheh* gemäss *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* (18. November 2016) mit Härte, da er dieses und andere alternative Glaubenssysteme – besonders solche, die Menschen zu konvertieren versuchen – als Bedrohung für die herrschende schiitische Ordnung ansieht.

**Verurteilungen Taheris.** Laut IRB Canada wurde Gründer Mohammed Ali Taheri mehrfach festgenommen, bedroht und gefoltert.

- Fünfjährige Haftstrafe, Geldstrafe (Mai 2010)

Im Mai 2010 wurde Taheri laut *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* (18. November 2016) wegen angeblicher «Beleidigung des Heiligen» («*insulting the sacred*»), «unmoralischen Kontakts zu Frauen» und «Durchführens illegaler medizinischer Prozeduren» zu einer fünfjährigen Gefängnisstrafe, 74 Peitschenhieben und einer Zahlung von neun Milliarden Rial (ungefähr 300'000 US-Dollar) verurteilt.

- Todesstrafe (August 2015)

Gemäss *Amnesty International* (24. Februar 2016) und USDOS (10. August 2016) verurteilte ein Revolutionsgericht in Teheran Taheri im August 2015 wegen «Verbreitens von Korruption auf der Erde» durch die Entwicklung einer spirituellen Doktrin und den Aufbau der Gruppe *Erfan-e Halgheh* zum Tode.

- Aufhebung des Todesurteils (Dezember 2015)

Im Dezember 2015 hob das Oberste Gericht laut *UN Human Rights Council* (10. März 2016) das Todesurteil gegen Mohammad Ali Taheri auf und verwies den Fall gemäss USDOS (10. August 2016) an das Gericht zurück.

- Erneute Verurteilung, Hungerstreik und Koma (Juni 2016)

Laut *Amnesty International* (20. Oktober 2016) wurde Taheri im Juni 2016 zum zweiten Mal wegen «Verbreitens von Korruption auf der Erde» verurteilt und sass wie bereits seit fünf Jahren weiterhin in Sektion 2A des Evin-Gefängnisses in Teheran ein. Am 28. September 2016 habe er einen Hungerstreik begonnen, und sein Gesundheitszustand habe sich deutlich verschlechtert. Als er sich der Anordnung widersetzte, vor laufender Kamera «Geständnisse» abzugeben, sei er geschlagen worden. Seit dem 16. Oktober 2016 habe er keinen Kontakt mehr zu seiner Familie. Laut *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* (18. November 2016) fiel er am 18. Oktober 2016 in ein Koma und kam deshalb angeblich ins Spital, seine Familie wurde jedoch nicht über seinen Aufenthaltsort informiert.

**Verurteilungen von Anhängerinnen und Anhängern Taheris.** Auch Anhängerinnen und Anhänger von *Erfan-e Halgheh* waren gemäss im IRB-Bericht vom 6. November 2013 zitierten Quellen Repressionen durch die Regierung ausgesetzt, einschliesslich Razzien und Festnahmen in ihrem Büro in Teheran. Anhängerinnen und Anhänger seien inhaftiert, befragt, belästigt und bedroht und einige ihrer Treffen unterbrochen worden. Im Folgenden seien einige neuere Beispiele aus den Jahren 2014 bis 2016 aufgeführt.

**Masoumeh Zia**, eine Anhängerin Taheris, wurde laut *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* (20. Juli 2015) am 8. Oktober 2014 zusammen mit **57 weiteren Anhängerinnen und 20 Anhängern** Taheris vor dem Revolutionsgericht festgenommen, bevor sie dort gegen die Inhaftierung Taheris protestieren konnten. Während die meisten am selben Tag freigelassen wurden, wurde Zia und zwei andere Frauen zwischen fünf und acht Tagen festgehalten und danach verurteilt, sie selbst zu einem Jahr Gefängnis und 74 Peitschenhieben. Das Urteil sei vom Berufungsgericht aufrechterhalten worden.

Das *UN Human Rights Council* erwähnt in seinem Bericht vom 12. März 2015 einen Artikel der *Fars News Agency* vom 6. Februar 2015, gemäss dem **16 Trainerinnen und Trainer** («instructors») von *Erfan-e Halgheh* zu insgesamt 37 Jahren Gefängnis und Geldstrafen von insgesamt 130 Millionen Toman (1.3 Milliarden Rial oder 47'127 US-Dollar) verurteilt wurden. Anklagepunkte seien unter anderem Blasphemie und das Erwerben illegaler Reichtümer gewesen.

Im Juli 2015 habe laut *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* (1. September 2016) Taheris Anhängerin **Ziba Habibpour** eine dreijährige Haftstrafe angetreten, ebenso **Masoumeh Zia**.

**Dariush Adeem**, ein weiterer Anhänger Taheris, wurde laut *UN Human Rights Council* (10. März 2016) am 15. August 2015 von vier Männern in Zivil, wahrscheinlich Agenten der Revolutionsgarden, festgenommen, nachdem er an einem Treffen zur Unterstützung Taheris teilgenommen hatte. Er wurde in Handschellen gelegt, seine Augen wurden verbunden und er wurde ins Dastgerd-Gefängnis seiner Heimatstadt Esfahan

gebracht. Während der ersten drei Tage, in denen er verhört wurde, wurde er laut Berichten geschlagen und war Misshandlungen ausgesetzt. Vier Tage später wurde er über die Anklage informiert, die auch «Störung der öffentlichen Ordnung» beinhaltete, hatte jedoch keinen Zugang zu einem Anwalt. Er wurde elf Tage nach seiner Festnahme auf Kautionsfreilassung, jedoch zweimal für weitere Befragungen vorgeladen und unter Druck gesetzt, die Namen der Organisatorinnen und Organisatoren der Versammlung und von Anhängerinnen und Anhängern Taheris preiszugeben. Er verliess Iran im Oktober 2015.

Im Mai 2016 wurden laut *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* (1. September 2016) **Sara Saei** und **Zahra Sadat Ebrahimi** zu je drei Monaten Gefängnis und Peitschenhieben verurteilt, allerdings sei die Vollstreckung der Urteile für zwei Jahre ausgesetzt worden.

Am 1. September 2016 berichtete *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* ausserdem von der Festnahme von **Vahid Pourtahmasb**, eines Anhängers Taheris, am 19. August 2016 durch die Revolutionsgarden in der Stadt Babol. Pourtahmasb sei in den Jahren 2014 und 2015 bereits dreimal festgenommen worden, zweimal in Teheran und einmal in Qom. Er sei aber jedesmal wieder freigelassen worden, nachdem er versprochen hatte, nicht an weiteren Aktivitäten zur Unterstützung Taheris teilzunehmen.

*International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* berichtete am 25. November 2016, **ungefähr 50 Anhängerinnen und Anhänger** von Mohammad Ali Taheri seien am 21. November 2016 von Geheimdienstbeamten in Zivil geschlagen und von der Polizei festgenommen worden, als sie Parlamentariern Briefe über Taheris Situation überbringen wollten. Insgesamt hatten sich hunderte Anhängerinnen und Anhänger vor dem Parlament versammelt. Sowohl Männer als auch Frauen seien geschlagen worden, und sie seien auch fotografiert worden. Die 50 Festgenommenen seien zunächst in die Haftanstalt Vozara in Teheran und am nächsten Tag ins Evin-Gefängnis gebracht worden. Zehn von ihnen seien am selben Tag nach Unterzeichnung einer Erklärung, sie würden nicht an zukünftigen Kundgebungen teilnehmen, freigelassen worden. Von den anderen 40 seien die Frauen ins Gefängnis Gharchak und die Männer ins Gefängnis Fashafouyeh gebracht worden. Eine Kautionsfreilassung sei auf 50 Millionen Toman (500 Millionen Rial oder 15'600 US-Dollar) festgelegt worden.

**Zwei Anhängerinnen Taheris weiterhin im Frauentrakt des Evin-Gefängnisses inhaftiert.** Gemäss der Studie «*Inside the Women's Ward: Mistreatment of Women Political Prisoners at Iran's Evin Prison*», die die *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* am 20. Juni 2016 veröffentlichte, sassen zu diesem Zeitpunkt zwei Anhängerinnen Taheris, **Ziba Pourhabib** und **Fahimeh A'rafi** in der Frauenabteilung des Evin-Gefängnisses ein. Beide waren wegen «Beleidigung des Heiligen» («*insulting the sacred*») verurteilt worden: Pourhabib zu drei Jahren und A'rafi zu fünf Jahren Haft.

**Mehrere Proteste gegen die Inhaftierung Taheris vor dem Evin-Gefängnis in den Jahren 2014 und 2015.** *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* berichtete am 20. Juli 2015 von mehreren Protesten von Anhängerinnen und Anhängern Taheris, die im Jahr 2014 vor dem Evin-Gefängnis stattgefunden hätten.



Am 21. November 2015 seien gemäss *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* (8. Juli 2016) **18 Personen** vor dem Evin-Gefängnis festgenommen und am 22. Februar 2016 wegen Unterstützung Taheris zu je 91 Tagen Gefängnis und 74 Peitschenhieben verurteilt worden. Gemäss *UN Human Rights Council* (10. März 2016) befand sich unter ihnen **Sara Saei**. Friedliche Proteste gegen die illegale Festnahme von Menschen- und Bürgerrechtsaktivistinnen und –aktivisten hätten jeweils samstags und montags stattgefunden. Saei wurde von den Behörden offenbar über die Anklage, «Störung der öffentlichen Ordnung», informiert und in Abteilung 2-A des Evin-Gefängnisses gebracht, wo sie für vier Nächte in Isolationshaft festgehalten und befragt wurde. Sie wurde aufgefordert, ein schriftlich festgehaltenes Versprechen zu unterzeichnen, dass sie Treffen und Versammlungen meiden würde. Später wurde sie ins Gharchak-Gefängnis in Varmin gebracht und auf Kautions freigelassen. Erst als sie nach Gharchak gebracht wurde, konnte sie ihre Familie kontaktieren.

Gemäss einem Artikel von *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* vom 8. Juli 2016 berichtete eine bereits oben genannte Anhängerin Taheris, **Zahra Sadat Ebrahimi**, von ihrer Festnahme am 23. November 2015. Wöchentlich fänden vor dem Evin-Gefängnis Proteste von Anhängerinnen und Anhängern Taheris gegen dessen Inhaftierung statt. Diese Proteste seien immer friedlich und würden schweigend durchgeführt, wobei die Anhängerinnen und Anhänger Transparente hochhalten würden. Am 23. November 2015 sei ein weiterer solcher Protest geplant gewesen, aber sie sei zusammen mit 13 anderen Personen vor Beginn des Protestes festgenommen worden. Die Agenten hätten sie bei früheren Protesten identifiziert. Die Frauen seien ins Gharchak-Gefängnis und die Männer ins Evin-Gefängnis gebracht worden; sie selbst sei nach 15 Tagen durch Zahlung einer Kautions von 500 Millionen Rial (16'200 US-Dollar) freigekommen. Am 8. März 2016 seien alle 14 Personen – 10 Frauen und vier Männer – wegen «Störens der öffentlichen Ordnung durch Teilnahme an einer illegalen Versammlung zur Unterstützung des Anführers der *Erfan-e Halgheh*-Sekte» zu drei Monaten Gefängnis und zehn Peitschenhieben auf Bewährung verurteilt worden. Allerdings handele es sich bei fünf der verurteilten Personen nicht um Anhängerinnen und Anhänger Taheris, sondern um Bürgerrechtlerinnen und Bürgerrechtler, die zur selben Zeit vor dem Evin-Gefängnis protestieren wollten.

**Sammlung von Unterschriften zur Unterstützung Taheris.** Laut der Website der *International Taheri Campaign* (ohne Datum, zuletzt abgerufen am 9. Dezember 2016) begann die internationale Kampagne zur Unterstützung von Mohammad Ali Taheri am 4. Mai 2011, nachdem Taheri zum zweiten Mal festgenommen wurde. Während der Kampagne sammelten Taheris Anhängerinnen und Anhänger unter anderem Unterschriften, um Vertreterinnen und Vertreter der UN von seiner Unschuld zu überzeugen. Auf der Website *Avaaz.org* wurde am 2. August 2013 eine Online-Petition zur Unterstützung Taheris ins Leben gerufen, die weiterhin läuft. Die Petition zielt darauf ab, die internationale Gemeinschaft dazu zu bewegen, auf die Islamische Republik Iran Druck auszuüben, Taheri sofort freizulassen und alle Anklagepunkte gegen ihn fallenzulassen.

IRB Canada, 6. November 2013:

## « 1. Interuniversalism

### 1.1 Overview

**Interuniversalism [also known in Persian as Erfan-e Halgheh, Erfan(e) Halgheh, Erfan-e Halqeh, Erfan-e Kayhani or Erfan Kaihan] is also known as "Interuniversal Mysticism" (Interuniversalism Inc. n.d.), "Mysticism of the Ring" (Doostdar Apr. 2012, 130) or "Cosmic Mysticism" (IOPHRI 12 Aug. 2013; Doostdar Apr. 2012, 130). Sources describe Interuniversalism as "a spiritual doctrine" (Interuniversalism UK n.d.), "a mystical outlook" (Interuniversalism Inc. n.d.), a "mysticism" (Doostdar Apr. 2012, 130), a "philosophy" (MEHR 27 Oct. 2013) and "a school of thought" or "belief structure" (Senior Researcher 28 Oct. 2013). It originated in Iran (Interuniversalism Inc. n.d.).**

Sources indicate that **Interuniversalism was founded by Mohammad Ali Taheri** (Doostdar Apr. 2012, 131; MEHR 27 Oct. 2013), **who claimed that in 1978, he "received divine inspirations"** (MEHR 27 Oct. 2013). In a doctoral dissertation written for Harvard University on the perceptions of the supernatural among members of the urban middle class in Tehran, Alireza Doostdar writes that **Taheri claimed he "'received'" knowledge of Interuniversalism after profound questioning of existence and that " at the peak of his career in 2008, [Taheri] oversaw an impressive network of seminars and informal 'therapy clinics' spread across urban centers in Iran and beyond"** (Apr. 2012, 131-133).

### 1.2 Beliefs

The website of Interuniversalism UK, which declares itself the "official website of Erfan Halghe Community in the UK," states that **Interuniversalism**

**is based on connection with the intelligence which governs the universe. This connection is via "circles" which act like spiritual tools. Each Circle has a defined purpose, and does something unique.** (Interuniversalism UK n.d.)

The website of California-based Interuniversalism Inc., which describes itself as a legally registered non-profit organization, states the following:

**Interuniversal Mysticism is a mystical outlook ... its insights conform to the framework of Iranian Sufism (mysticism). Interuniversal Mysticism examines the mystical concepts both in theory and in practice, relating to all human beings; therefore everybody regardless of their race, nationality, religion and personal beliefs, can conceive and accept its theories and benefit from its practical aspects.**

**The practical aspect of Erfan (Mysticism) is based on establishing a link to the several circles (Halgheh) of the "Cosmic Consciousness," through which an entire pathway of exploration and transformation is opened, and will be applicable in daily life.** (Interuniversalism Inc. n.d.)

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a lawyer working for the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, a US-based independent NGO founded in 2004 by human rights scholars and lawyers that monitors the human rights situation in Iran (IHRDC n.d.), answered some questions based on an interview conducted with a practitioner of Interuniversalism. The lawyer stated that, according to the practitioner,

**adherents to Interuniversalism believe that there is a qualitative aspect to the universe and a quantitative aspect, and that they are concerned with the former. Furthermore, he added that they believe that much of existence is connected to things 'that happen behind the curtain' and that Interuniversalism is the way to opening that curtain. (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013)**

The lawyer indicated that the practitioner he interviewed stressed that **Interuniversalism "is not seen by its adherents as a contradiction of any traditional faiths" (ibid.). However, Doostdar notes that while "Taheri has avoided making a direct link between his receptions and the divine revelations of the prophets nothing in his writing or his teachings warrant making a distinction between the two" and that "[s]ome of his followers ... consider him to be nothing less than a prophet" (Apr. 2012, 133).**

#### 1.2.1 Faradarmani and Psymontology

Sources state that **two subsidiary belief systems or philosophies, faradarmani and psymontology, which are described as therapeutic or healing practices, exist within Interuniversalism (Senior Researcher 28 Oct. 2013; IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013; Doostdar Apr. 2012, 133). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a senior researcher at the Human Rights in Iran Unit of the City University of New York's Brooklyn College (Senior Researcher 5 Nov. 2013) stated that "Faradamani and Psymontology are attempts at housing some of [Taheri's] ideas in a scientific framework" (ibid. 28 Oct. 2013).**

The lawyer for the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center stated that **faradarmani "seems to focus on prayer or some sort of meditation or consciousness as a mean of obtaining wellness" and involves "the rejection of modern medicine" (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013). According to Doostdar, Taheri describes psymontology as "a 'meta-holistic science of the mind and psyche'" (Apr. 2012, 133).**

#### 1.3 Structure

The Senior Researcher stated that **Taheri "is seen as the formal leader" of followers of Interuniversalism (Senior Researcher 28 Oct. 2013). He added that**

**[m]uch of the formal structure for [Interuniversalism] has been established [by] followers outside Iran, with Taheri's blessing but absent his day to day management. Taheri has tried to establish academic institutes outside Iran also to study his healing practices. (ibid.)**

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Director of Interuniversalism UK provided the following details about the structure of the group outside of Iran:



**At the present there are two active established organizations, which are well-known. One is Interuniversalism Inc. in the USA ([www.interuniversalism.us](http://www.interuniversalism.us)) and the other is Interuniversal LTD in the UK ([www.erfanhalghe.co.uk](http://www.erfanhalghe.co.uk)), [which] is more commonly known as [the] Erfan Halghe Community in the UK. [...]**

*The Director of Interuniversalism Inc. is Mrs. Shahnaz Niroomanesh. [...] Mrs. Niroomanesh has been one of the close students of Mohammad Ali Taheri and was one of the managers in the initial organization formed by Mohammad Ali Taheri himself.*

*The Director of Interuniversal LTD added that "I am in close contact with Mrs. Niroomanesh; however the two companies are not officially partners due to legal processes" (30 Oct. 2013).*

*The lawyer at IHRDC stated that he understood that*

**all of the information regarding the beliefs to which the group adheres is not made available at once, and that an enthusiast has to undergo a process in order to obtain that information. Based on the witness' own experience, I believe that an adherent to Interuniversalism is made a 'coach' or teacher after a few years. His testimony did not indicate the existence of any hierarchy beyond that. (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013)The Director of Interuniversalism UK similarly stated that **Interuniversalism has eight main courses and three supplemental courses that people "could attend"** (Interuniversalism UK 30 Oct. 2013). **After followers finish the fifth course, they can " apply to be trainer[s] to teach the courses to others"** (ibid.).**

#### 1.4 Geographic Presence and Number of Adherents

*According to sources, **the group is active in Tehran, as well as in other cities in Iran** (Senior Researcher 28 Oct. 2013; IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013; Doostdar Apr. 2012, 132).*

*The Director of Interuniversalism UK stated that*

*[d]ue to the success rate of Faradarmani, huge number of people from all around Iran became interested to try and learn Interuniversalism. **The last statistics which goes back to 3 years ago and was announced by Master Taheri ... shows around 2-3 million followers and around 500,000 trainers across Iran.** (30 Oct. 2013)*

*Sources indicate that the group is also present outside of Iran (Senior Researcher 28 Oct. 2013; IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013; Doostdar Apr. 2012, 132-133). Doostdar reports that **representatives of Interuniversalism are found in Malaysia, Turkey, Germany, Dubai, the US, Australia, Canada, Austria, the UK and Switzerland but that "accurate numbers of [Taheri's] followers are impossible to determine"** (Doostdar Apr. 2012, 132). The Interuniversalism UK Director likewise states that "there is no statistical data which shows the number of followers and trainers," but that **"it can be estimated that there are around 10 million followers and 1 million trainer[s] across the globe"** (30 Oct. 2013). The website of Interuniversalism Inc. claims that **"there are millions of people who are familiar with and users of [Interuniversalism's] practical applications" and that "about" 20,000 people worldwide serve as "trainers" of its concepts** (n.d.).*

The Senior Researcher at the Human Rights in Iran Unit indicated that the number of practitioners of Interuniversalism has increased (28 Oct. 2013). As an example of the group's "widespread" popularity and "the strength of [Taheri's] appeal," Doostdar reports that "one of the founding texts of Cosmic Mysticism went into eight reprints between 2007 and 2009, for a total of 90,000 prints" (Apr. 2012, 132).

### 1.5 Activities

According to the Senior Researcher, **practitioners of Interuniversalism promote Taheri's work both in and out of Iran, including through websites, the publication and distribution of his written works, by holding "healing sessions" and by teaching healing methods** (28 Oct. 2013). Doostdar also notes that **the group holds seminars and "informal 'therapy clinics'"** (Apr. 2012, 131). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the President of the California-based Mission for the Establishment of Human Rights in Iran (MEHR), "a network of individuals committed to strengthening advocacy on human rights situation in Iran" (MEHR n.d.), also stated that "[t]here are several websites that promote Taheri's ideas and mostly seem to be outside Iran" (ibid. 27 Oct. 2013).

## 2. Situation and Treatment of Practitioners of Interuniversalism

### 2.1 General Treatment by Society

According to the Director of Interuniversalism UK,

**the common attitude towards Interuniversalism is very positive, however it is considered dangerous, and people in Iran follow the activities secretly. It is also observed that people do not tend to provide their real name when [they] are talking about this doctrine, even if they are in a foreign country.** (30 Oct. 2013)

The Senior Researcher said that **in Iran,**

**[m]any conservative pro-government Muslim[s] have a negative view of new and alternative spiritual practices and have a documented history of violence towards these religious groups. Local clerics sometimes incite this violence. I do not know if this violence has been directed at Interuniversalism.** (28 Oct. 2013)

Some sources report that **some religious authorities have specifically denounced Interuniversalism** (MEHR 27 Oct. 2013; Doostdar Apr. 2012, 130). Doostdar reports that **condemnation of the group has come from state-affiliated Shi'i authorities** (Apr. 2012, 130). According to the lawyer at IHRDC, **"[o]ne cleric, Hamidreza Mazaheri Seif, repeatedly called for the group to be shut down and its members arrested due to the unorthodox nature of their beliefs"** (25 Oct. 2013).

Sources note that there have been **negative depictions of Interuniversalism in state media** (Senior Researcher 28 Oct. 2013; Doostdar Apr. 2012, 130). The Senior Researcher indicated that **"Iranian newspapers also often publish disparaging articles about Interuniversalism, its members and Taheri"** (Senior Researcher 28 Oct. 2013).

## 2.2 Treatment by Authorities

According to the Senior Researcher, "[t]he [s]tate and state officials think of Interuniversalism as a cult and a ... scam" (ibid.). The Director of Interuniversalism UK stated that **a bill that aims to ban "Interuniversalism Mysticism" in Iran and stipulates punishments for "anyone attending, promoting and managing 'fake spiritual doctrine'" has been drafted; however, he added that the bill "has not reached the parliament open session" yet** (Interuniversalism UK 30 Oct. 2013; ibid. 5 Nov. 2013). The Director added that **"fake spiritual doctrines" are "defined as non-Islamic doctrines, and the government agencies have explicitly characterised Interuniversalism as a 'fake spiritual doctrine'"** (ibid. 30 Oct. 2013).

Further details on this ban or corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate

The Director of Interuniversalism UK further stated that **"[a]round 3-4 years ago the Iranian authorities started to act against the followers and trainers of Interuniversalism, especially Master Mohammad Ali Taheri,"** adding that **"[t]hese actions have become more serious from the third detention of Master Mohammad Ali Taheri"** (ibid.).

The lawyer at IHRDC reported that **Taheri has been arrested "multiple times,"** and added that according to practitioner of Interuniversalism who was interviewed, **Taheri has been "threatened and tortured by the authorities"** (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013). **Taheri was last arrested in May 2011** (MEHR 27 Oct. 2013; Doostdar Apr. 2012, 131). The lawyer stated that he was **"convicted of charges including blasphemy, claims of religious revelations and presenting himself as an expert on medicine without having any background in the field"** (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013). According to two sources, **he is serving a five-year sentence** (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013; Inside of Iran 16 Feb. 2012). The President of MEHR, however, indicated that the sentence was for **seven years of imprisonment** (27 Oct. 2013). Some sources note that Taheri was **also sentenced to 74 lashes** (Inside of Iran 16 Feb. 2012; MEHR 27 Oct. 2013; HRANA 20 May 2013) **and a fine** (MEHR 27 Oct. 2013; HRANA 20 May 2013).

The Director of Interuniversalism UK also stated that **"[a]part from Master Taheri himself, his family in Iran has also been mistreated by the Iranian authorities to increase the pressures on Master Taheri"** (Interuniversalism UK 30 Oct. 2013). Sources report that **as of August 2013, Taheri was in poor health condition due to an ongoing hunger strike** (IOPHRI 19 Aug. 2013; HRANA 8 Aug. 2013).

According to the practitioner of Interuniversalism interviewed by the IHRDC lawyer, **the followers of Interuniversalism have reportedly been subject to "government repression," including raids and arrests in their Tehran offices** (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013). The Senior Researcher at the Human Rights in Iran Unit also stated that **followers of Taheri have been "detained, interrogated, harassed, and threatened" and "[s]ome of their gatherings have been disrupted"** (28 Oct. 2013). According to the Director of Interuniversalism UK, **"many trainers and followers have been detained by Iranian security forces"** (30 Oct. 2013). The lawyer also stated that the interviewee had heard that some of those arrested were forced to "implicat[e] Taheri

under torture," but emphasized that this was "hearsay" (IHRDC 25 Oct. 2013). The interviewee also reportedly stated that **"all members of the group who were once arrested have since been freed on bail, but they are still periodically summoned by the authorities for questioning"** (ibid.). Iran Briefing Foundation, a non-profit human rights organization registered in the US that reports on "Iran's military apparatus dominance" and human rights violations by Iran's military (Iran Briefing Foundation n.d.), states that **a journalist and three doctors affiliated with Interuniversalism were arrested in June 2011** (ibid. 23 June 2011; ibid. 15 June 2011).» Quelle: Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Iran: Situation and treatment of practitioners of Interuniversalism (Erfan Halgheh) (2010-October 2013), 6. November 2013:

[www.refworld.org/docid/532017354.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/532017354.html).

International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 20. Juni 2016:

**«ZIBA POURHABIB, age unknown, is a follower of Dr. Mohammad Ali Taheri, the imprisoned leader of the banned alternative peaceful spiritual group Erfan-e Halgheh. She was originally arrested on October 8, 2014, and surrendered herself to serve her three-year sentence on July 1, 2015 on charges of "insulting the sacred. (...)**

**FAHIMEH A'RAFI, age unknown, is a follower of Dr. Mohammad Ali Taheri, the imprisoned leader of the banned alternative peaceful spiritual group Erfan-e Halgheh. The open practice of unrecognized faiths in Iran is typically treated as a crime. She was arrested on August 25, 2015, charged with "insulting the sacred," and sentenced to five years in prison.»** Quelle: International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, Inside the Women's Ward: Mistreatment of Women Political Prisoners at Iran's Evin Prison, 20. Juni 2016, S. 14-15:

[www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/06/inside-the-women-ward-report/](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/06/inside-the-women-ward-report/).

International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 18. November 2016:

**«The family of imprisoned spiritual leader Mohammad Ali Taheri has not been informed of his location since October 18, 2016, when he was allegedly hospitalized after falling into a coma due to a three-week hunger strike. (...)**

**Mohammad Ali Taheri, who also taught at Tehran University, was practicing a form of alternative medicine based on spirituality when he was arrested on May 4, 2010 and charged with "insulting the sacred," "immoral contact with women," and "carrying out illegal medical procedures." He was sentenced to five years in prison, 74 lashes, and fined nine billion rials (approximately \$300,000). Four years later he was re-interrogated about his books and sentenced to death for spreading "corruption on earth."**

**Iran's security establishment has come down hard on Taheri and supporters of Erfan-e Halgheh, viewing it and any other alternative belief system, especially those seeking converts, as a threat to the prevailing Shia order.»** Quelle: International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, Location of Imprisoned Spiritual Leader Unknown a Month After He Allegedly Fell Into a Coma, 18. November 2016:

[www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/11/mohammad-ali-taheri-10/](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/11/mohammad-ali-taheri-10/).

Amnesty International, 24. Februar 2016:

**«In August, a Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted Mohammad Ali Taheri of “spreading corruption on earth” for establishing a spiritual doctrine and group called Erfan-e Halgheh, and sentenced him to death. He had previously received a five-year prison term and been sentenced to 74 lashes and a fine in 2011 for allegedly “insulting Islamic sanctities”. Prison sentences were also issued against several of his followers. In December, the Supreme Court overturned his sentence due to “incomplete investigations” and remanded the case to the Court of First Instance.»** Quelle: AI - Amnesty International, Amnesty International Report 2015/16 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Iran, 24. February 2016:  
[www.ecoi.net/local\\_link/319678/445083\\_en.html](http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/319678/445083_en.html).

USDOS, 10. August 2016:

**«On August 1, the Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced to death Mohammad Ali Taheri on new charges of “corruption on earth.” Taheri, founder of the spiritual doctrine “Interuniversalism,” had already served four years of a 37-year sentence for “insulting the sanctities” and had reportedly been in solitary confinement since 2011 in Ward 2A of Evin Prison (the ward supervised by the Revolutionary Guards). He went on a hunger strike following the announcement of the sentence. According to the media, the Supreme Court annulled his death sentence in December and referred his case back to the court which sentenced him to life in prison. He remained in prison at the end of the year.»** Quelle: USDOS - US Department of State, 2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Iran, 10. August 2016:  
[www.ecoi.net/local\\_link/328412/455688\\_en.html](http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/328412/455688_en.html).

UN Human Rights Council, 10. März 2016:

**«61. (...) In December 2015, the Supreme Court also rejected the death sentence against spiritual leader Mohammad Ali Taheri, a well known author of alternative medical theories and founder of the group, Erfan-e-Halgheh, on the charge of “sowing corruption on Earth.” The sentence was issued while Mr. Taheri was already serving a five year sentence for the crime of “insulting [religious] sanctities” in relation to his peaceful activities. (...)**

**83. Ms. Sara Saei, a student and follower of Mr. Mohammad Taheri, participated in several peaceful gatherings convened on Saturdays and Mondays to protest against the unlawful arrests of human and civil rights activists and advocate for them. She was arrested by plainclothes agents on 21 November 2015 when she was participating in a gathering in front of Evin Prison to protest against arrest of Mr. Taheri. Authorities reportedly informed her of her charge, disturbing public order, immediately after her arrest. She was transferred to Ward 2-A of Evin Prison and kept in a solitary confinement for four nights. Her interrogators reportedly demanded information about the organizers of the gatherings and her ideas and personal beliefs. She was asked to sign a promissory note to avoid gatherings and assemblies. She was later transferred to Gharchak Prison in Varamin and released on bail. She was not allowed to contact her family until she was transferred to Gharchak Prison.**



**84. Mr. Dariush Adeem, a student and follower of Mr. Mohammad Taheri, was arrested on 15 August 2015 by four plainclothes men believed to be Revolutionary Guard agents after participating in a gathering in support of Mr. Taheri. He was handcuffed, blindfolded, and taken to Dastgerd Prison in Esfahan, where he lives. Mr. Adeem was reportedly beaten and subject to ill-treatment during the first three days of interrogations. Four days after his, he was informed of his charges, which included "disturbing the public order" but was not allowed to access to a lawyer. He was released on bail 11 days after his arrest but twice summoned for questioning and pressured to disclose the identities of the assembly organizers and followers of Mr. Taheri. He left Iran in October 2015.»**

Quelle: UN Human Rights Council, Supplementary information on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran [A/HRC/31/CRP.5] (Advance unedited version), 10. March 2016, S. 19, 32:

[www.ecoi.net/file\\_upload/1930\\_1458220035\\_a-hrc-31-crp-5-av.doc](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1458220035_a-hrc-31-crp-5-av.doc).

Amnesty International, 20. Oktober 2016:

**«Iranian spiritual teacher Mohammad Ali Taheri, who started a hunger strike on 28 September, has been held incommunicado since 16 October. The authorities are refusing to provide his family with any information about his fate and whereabouts. Iranian spiritual teacher Mohammad Ali Taheri, who has been languishing in solitary confinement in Section 2A of Tehran's Evin Prison for over five years, has been deprived of all contact with his family since 16 October. His family are in great distress over his fate and whereabouts, particularly because his health has deteriorated since he started a hunger strike on 28 September. They have gone to various prison and judicial officials to enquire about his conditions and whereabouts but the authorities have refused to provide them with any information. Judicial officials appear to have informally told his lawyers that Mohammad Ali Taheri lost consciousness on the night of 18 October and was transferred to a Tehran hospital where the Revolutionary Guards frequently take people who are in their custody and hospitalize them under pseudonyms. This information, however, has not been confirmed to his family. His family have said that his main interrogator and a masked man entered his cell on the fifth day of his hunger strike, took him to an interrogation room, and put him under pressure to give video-recorded "confessions". They have said that he was beaten when he resisted.**

**Mohammad Ali Taheri, who has been in detention since May 2011, started his latest hunger strike in protest at the authorities' refusal to release him even though he had completed serving his five-year prison sentence, which had been imposed on him for "insulting Islamic sanctities" for establishing a spiritual doctrine and group called Erfan-e Halgheh. In June 2016, he was acquitted of a second charge of "spreading corruption on earth", for which he had been previously sentenced to death in August 2015.»** Quelle: Amnesty International, Urgent Action: Mohammad Ali Taheri's whereabouts unknown, 20. Oktober 2016: [www.ecoi.net/file\\_upload/1226\\_1478183620\\_mde1350182016english.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1478183620_mde1350182016english.pdf).

International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 20. Juli 2015:

*«[Masoumeh] Zia, a 38-year-old geologist, was among nearly 80 supporters of Taheri arrested in Tehran last year and held at Evin Prison. “A number of Taheri’s students and colleagues gathered in front of Evin Prison a couple of times to protest his arrest and I was among them,” Zia told the Campaign. “The gatherings were peaceful and did not create any problems for passersby. We held signs for a couple of hours. Then on October 8, 2014, we were going to gather in front of the Revolutionary Court. But the atmosphere was so tense with the security measures taken on that day that the gathering didn’t take place. The police around the court quickly arrested anyone who looked suspicious.”*

*“I was arrested on that day with about 57 other women and 20 men. The agents took us to Evin [Prison] inside large vans. Most were let go on the same day... but I and two other women were held between five and eight days and then charged. I don’t know why. We did not do anything illegal,” Zia said.*

*Zia’s trial was held last February at Branch 26 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court presided over by Judge Ahmadzadeh, who **sentenced her to the year in prison and 74 lashes. The sentence was upheld by the appellate court, she said.**»* Quelle: International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, Member of Spiritual Group Sentenced to Prison and Lashes, 20. Juli 2015:

[www.iranhumanrights.org/2015/07/masoumeh-zia-sentenced/](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2015/07/masoumeh-zia-sentenced/).

UN Human Rights Council, 12. März 2015:

*«113. On 6 February 2015, Fars News Agency reported that 16 instructors from the Erfan Halgheh (“Inter-Universalism”) spiritual movement were sentenced to a total of 37 years in prison and fined 130 million toman, on charges including **blasphemy and obtaining illicit wealth.**»* Quelle: UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, 12. März 2015, S. 44:

[www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_28\\_70\\_en.doc](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session28/Documents/A_HRC_28_70_en.doc).

International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 1. September 2016:

*«Another student of imprisoned spiritual group leader Mohammad Ali Taheri has been arrested, this time in northern Iran. **Vahid Pourtahmasb was arrested on August 19, 2016 by the Sarallah Headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards in the city of Babol**, 128 miles north of Tehran, an informed source told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran.*

***Pourtahmasb is the fifth student of Taheri to have been arrested since 2015. Four other students have been prosecuted for peacefully supporting Taheri at demonstrations following his imprisonment in 2010. Ziba Habibpour began a three-year prison sentence in July 2015, the same month as Masoumeh Zia, and in May 2016 Sara Saei and Zahra Sadat Ebrahimi were each sentenced to three months in prison and lashings, but their sentences were suspended for two years.***

*(...) **Previously Pourtahmasb had been briefly detained on three occasions in 2014 and in 2015—twice in Tehran and once in the city of Qom—but was released***

***each time after pledging not to participate in activities in support of Taheri.»***

Quelle: International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, Iran's Security Establishment is Targeting the Students of an Imprisoned Spiritual Leader, 1. September 2016:  
[www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/09/taheri-follower-vahid-pourtahmasb-arrested-in-babol/](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/09/taheri-follower-vahid-pourtahmasb-arrested-in-babol/).

International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 25. November 2016:

***«Approximately 50 followers of imprisoned spiritual leader Mohammad Ali Taheri—who has been missing for more than a month—were beaten by plainclothes members of Iran's intelligence forces and then arrested by the police in front of Parliament on November 21, 2016, according to eyewitnesses. Hundreds of Taheri's followers had gathered in front of the Parliament building in Tehran to deliver letters about his case to lawmakers, but were violently attacked by plainclothes agents, according to an eyewitness who asked not to be identified. "(...) They started to beat the men, and when the women came to help, the agents beat them, too." (...) "(...) There were also individuals who were constantly taking pictures of us.»***

Mohammad Ranjbar told the Campaign that his wife was among the people who were arrested: "On Wednesday morning, November 23, my wife [Firouzeh Yaghoubi] contacted me from Gharchak Prison in Varamin (city). She said that on November 21 **she and about 50 others were [rounded up in front of Parliament] and first taken to Vozara Detention Center in Tehran and then to Evin Prison the next day. Ten of them were freed the same day after signing a commitment not to participate in future rallies, but the rest were transferred to Gharchak and Fashafouyeh Prisons—the women were sent to Gharchak and the men to Fashafouyeh.**"

Ranjbar added that **he hoped his wife could go free on November 27 because they had posted the bail, which was set at 50 million tomans (\$15,600 USD).**» Quelle: International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, Missing Spiritual Leader's Supporters Beaten by Plainclothes Intelligence Agents at Iran's Parliament, 25. November 2016:  
[www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/11/mohammad-ali-taheri-11/](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/11/mohammad-ali-taheri-11/).

International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 8. Juli 2016:

***«Fourteen people have been handed suspended prison and flogging sentences for allegedly calling for the release of imprisoned spiritual leader Mohammad Ali Taheri, but five of the accused are actually civil rights activists who were rounded up at the same time as Taheri's supporters. A student of Taheri's, Zahra Sadat Ebrahimi, told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that 14 people were put on trial as a group of Taheri's students on March 8, 2016, "but five of the defendants had nothing to do with him—they are civil rights activists. But the court bunched us together and paid no attention to their statements, or their lawyers' objections, and all of us got the same sentence.»***

***"A number of Mohammad Ali Taheri's students and sympathizers gather in front of Evin Prison every week to protest his imprisonment and death sentence, which has now been rescinded," said Ebrahimi. "These protests were always peaceful***

**and carried out in silence. We only carried banners and held them in front of the prison. On November 23, 2015 we were supposed to have another gathering, but agents arrested us.”**

**“We had no gathering on that day. When I got out of the car, agents arrested me. Another woman was dragged out of a taxi. The agents had identified us in gatherings during the previous weeks. We were all taken to the Vozara detention center [in Tehran] and from there to Evin Prison. The judge insisted that we had been paid by Mr. Taheri to hold protest rallies for him. When I objected, the judge threatened to sentence me to seven years in prison,” she said.**

**Ebrahimi added that 10 women including herself and four men have each been sentenced to three months in prison and 10 lashes, suspended for two years, by Branch 1044 of the Criminal Court in Tehran Province for “disturbing the public order by participating in an illegal gathering in support of the head of the Erfane Halgheh sect,” which is led by Taheri. (...) The detained men were kept in Evin Prison and the women were transferred to Gharchak Prison in the city of Varamin just outside of Tehran. Ebrahimi said she was released on 500 million rials (\$16,200 USD) bail after 15 days. (...)**

**In a separate incident, 18 followers of Taheri were arrested in front of Evin Prison on November 21, 2015 and were each sentenced to 91 days in prison and 74 lashes by Branch 1060 of the Tehran Criminal Court on February 22, 2016. They included Simin Eyvazzadeh and Hashem Zeinali, who don’t follow Taheri, but were nevertheless arrested with the group of his followers.»** Quelle: International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, Guilt by Association: Peaceful Demonstrators Slapped with Suspended Lashing and Prison Sentences, 8. Juli 2016: [www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/07/taheri-followers-sentenced-to-prison-and-lashes/](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2016/07/taheri-followers-sentenced-to-prison-and-lashes/).

International Taheri Campaign, ohne Datum (zuletzt abgerufen am 9. Dezember 2016):

**«International Campaign to Support Mohammad Ali Taheri began its operation on May 4th, 2011 after Mr. Taheri’s was arrested for a second time. (...)**

**Taheri’s followers, at the same time, conducted interviews with the media, organized campaigns and collected signatures to plea with the United Nations representatives, and arranged for demonstrations in United States, Canada, England, Germany, Australia, and Sweden to inform the world about his innocence. Through these efforts students of Mr. Taheri made contact with Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, special rapporteur at the United Nations who reports on human rights violations in Iran, participated in a conversation with him in United States and Canada were able to get Taheri’s name and his ideology, Interuniversalism, on the list of groups that are under the pressure of the by Iranian government in this annual report on March of 2014.»** Quelle: International Taheri Campaign, About Campaign, ohne Datum (zuletzt abgerufen am 9. Dezember 2016):

<http://tahericampaign.org/about-campaign/>.

Avaaz.org, 2. August 2013:

«M.A. Taheri, an Iranian spiritual teacher, researcher, and scholar of complementary and alternative medicine for more than 3 decades was sentenced to imprisonment. However, he has never been involved in any political activities within or outside of Iran. His teachings of love and union of all mankind have been a source of inspiration and healing to countless people around the world seeking inner peace and happiness, as well as many scientific and research centers. He has been awarded three Honorary Doctorate Degrees from international universities. **Arrested and imprisoned on an irrational count, he has never been given the opportunity for accessing a fair trial. The campaign has been launched to demand that the international community bring all possible pressure to bare upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately release Master Taheri and drop all charges against him. His life is in earnest danger.**» Quelle: Avaaz.org, Where is Mohammad Ali Taheri, a teacher of love and unity who was threatened for execution, and illegally imprisoned!, 2. August 2013:

[https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/Free\\_Mohammad\\_Ali\\_Taheri\\_a\\_spiritual\\_teacher\\_and\\_humanitarian\\_speaking\\_of\\_love\\_and\\_unity\\_for\\_all\\_beings\\_from\\_illegal\\_a/?pv=6](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/Free_Mohammad_Ali_Taheri_a_spiritual_teacher_and_humanitarian_speaking_of_love_and_unity_for_all_beings_from_illegal_a/?pv=6).