

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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When replying please

refer to: GC-28560

10 September 2014

3 'Izzat 171 B.E.

To all believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Friends,

In May 2013, the National Spiritual Assembly wrote to the Universal House of Justice to seek guidance regarding the appropriate Bahá'í response to the current debate on the forthcoming referendum in Scotland. As discussion of the issue in the wider society is reaching new levels of intensity, not just in Scotland but across the whole of the United Kingdom, the National Spiritual Assembly felt it timely to remind the friends of the clear guidance that the House of Justice issued on this specific matter:

The question of independence for Scotland is plainly a political issue, and Bahá'ís should refrain from discussing the matter, especially within the Bahá'í community. Believers are, of course, entirely free to decide for themselves whether to participate in the referendum and how to vote, taking care that their doing so does not lead to an impression of aligning with a partisan perspective.

... their abstaining from taking sides on the issue of Scottish independence should not be interpreted as Bahá'ís being uninterested in the affairs of their society. Rather, their approach to the advancement of society is derived from the teachings enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, at the heart of which is the cardinal principle of the oneness of humankind.

(From a letter dated 16 July 2013 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom)

In this connection, the House of Justice also commended to the believers a careful study of its letter dated 2 March 2013 to the Bahá'ís of Iran, a copy of which is enclosed for your ease of reference. The letter not only sheds light on the danger of following, however unintentionally, the habits of a partisan political mindset, but also provides essential insights into the distinctive way in which Bahá'ís are in fact endeavouring to contribute to the advancement of society on our islands, and indeed in all parts of the world.

We have every confidence that the friends will steadfastly adhere to the explicit instructions of the House of Justice as conveyed in its letter of 16 July, and trust that through the believers' efforts to deepen on the guidance of the Supreme Body, it will be clear how to act and communicate

in relation to the referendum, including in the social media environment. However, should any queries arise in this regard, please turn to the National Assembly for further guidance.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Patrick O'Mara', written over a horizontal line.

Patrick O'Mara,
Secretary

Enclosure

cc. Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi