

**Message addressed to the Universal House of Justice from the delegates gathered at  
the 116th United States Bahá'í National Convention**

April 27, 2024

To Our Dearly Beloved Universal House of Justice,

Gathered within the loving embrace of the Mother Temple of the West and imbued with a spirit of joy consistent with this most sacred Ridván Festival, the delegates to the 116th United States Bahá'í National Convention extend to you our deepest love and heartfelt greetings. As followers of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order and protagonists of His Divine Plan, we are most grateful for the unconditional love and the unceasing flow of guidance that is shared by our Supreme Institution. The Convention was blessed with the presence of Counselors Natasha Bruss and Billy Silva, two members of the Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh, and former member of the Universal House of Justice, Mr. Stephen Birkland. In an attempt to convey both the spirit and the essence of this beautiful gathering of friends, we offer this brief testimony of our treasured time together during the Convention.

Our beloved Counselors helped to create a fertile environment for our initial consultation on the Bahá'í electoral process by sharing their precious insights, while allowing delegates to advance our collective understanding of the sacred nature of Bahá'í elections. In order to ensure that our Convention commenced with a solid grounding in divine guidance, we were accompanied through a study of and consultation about both the March 25, 2007, and the May 16, 2013, messages of the House of Justice, which highlighted the critical necessity of establishing the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh and the essential spirit of responsibility that the Bahá'í electoral process is intended to bring forth.

The uplifting devotional program at the House of Worship, featuring prayers and music by the Bahá'í choir, further elevated our spirits, formally opening the 181 B.E. National Convention. The delegates were lovingly welcomed by our National Spiritual Assembly in Foundation Hall. Through the reading of and reflection on the 2024 Ridván Message, we were reminded of the sense of urgency embedded in the Messages of the House of Justice. It was noted that even though the signs of the breakdown of society can be unsettling, the House of Justice assures us that we, as Bahá'ís, should not be confused, since we possess the methods and instruments that allow every soul to respond to the needs of the human race. We were encouraged to adopt a shift in consciousness and enter a mode of learning that is essential for our work.

Our beloved secretary of the National Assembly shared multiple accounts of how communities are learning to help those at the threshold embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. The reports of the secretary and treasurer inspired a spirit of love and unity amongst all the delegates. Often, in the hallways, we could hear delegates sharing with one another the spirit of devotionals and other teaching activities in their home clusters and regions.

Over the decades, a few significant turning-point moments have occurred at the National Conventions that subsequently transformed the community. The first of these took place during the era of mass teaching campaigns, when this community's membership soared from 16,000 to some 74,000 souls. The second transformative moment occurred when every delegate present at the National Convention signed a scroll beseeching the Universal House of Justice to grant the privilege of Huqúqu'lláh to the Bahá'ís of the United States.

The most vital and challenging issue took center stage during this year's consultation session dedicated to "A Moment of Historic Portent: Contributing to Social Transformation." The Convention was emotionally moved when delegates of African American, Indigenous American, and Latino heritage shared one heartfelt painful encounter with racism after another, providing a glimpse into the realities of our sisters and brothers who are living in a racially stratified society. Of particular note, reference was made to the traumatic weathering that people of color continue to endure. As noted by the National Spiritual Assembly, these consultations gave rise to a new spirit of healing. The National Assembly recognized this moving development as a third significant turning point in the recent history of National Conventions in the United States.

With confidence in our pursuit of the goals of the Nine Year Plan and a renewed commitment to making race unity a reality through our community-building efforts, we look forward to carrying forth the momentum generated during our time here at the National Convention.

With our deepest love and gratitude,

Delegates to the 116th United States Bahá'í National Convention