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Constructive Resilience: The Bahá'í Response to Oppression

Against the backdrop of dramatic struggles for social change in the twentieth century, characterized by non-violent opposition and civil disobedience, the Bahá'í community of Iran has pursued a distinctively non-adversarial approach to social change under conditions of violent oppression. This non-adversarial model has received little attention in the literature on social change. This presentation seeks to bring the model into focus by outlining the Bahá'í community's experience of oppression, by examining the principles that inform their collective response to oppression, by discussing the results of their response, and by deriving from this a set of heuristic insights that can guide further inquiry into the dynamics of peace and change.