



*We say No Deportations to Iran
We mean Human Rights in Canada*

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The Honourable Vic Toews, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P8

December 19, 2012

Re: Request to Immediately Impose a Moratorium Against Sending Refugees to Iran

Dear Minister Toews,

We are writing to request that you consider instituting a moratorium against the further deportation of refugees to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As you are well aware, for the past several years barely a day goes by without the world receiving further confirmation that the Iranian Government has the dubious distinction of having developed the bleakest human rights record. The Iranian regime's systematic violation of the most fundamental human rights has been indiscriminate and unrelenting. Since the uprisings following the fraudulent presidential elections of 2009, the Iranian Government has embarked on a wholesale campaign to systematically persecute and imprison innumerable student leaders, journalists and bloggers, lawyers, trade union members, and religious and sexual minorities.

Canadians first became all too familiar with the arbitrary nature of the Iranian regime after the tragic death of Ms. Zahra Kazemi in 2003. Yet more recent incidents involving Mr. Hossein Derakhshan, Mr. Saeed Malekpour, and Mr. Hamid Ghassemi-Shall remind us that the Iranian Government's sinister penchant for fabricating spurious legal charges against innocent individuals recognizes no bounds, and that no individual in that country is immune from being convicted of the most baseless crimes.

For the above reasons, all Canadians can take pride that over the past decade our Government has taken the lead in having the United Nations investigate and condemn human rights violations occurring in Iran.

Despite applauding the general thrust of Canada's steadfast policy of condemning Iran's record on human rights, we are concerned that our Government has not necessarily considered all of the more discrete policy implications that should follow from recognizing Iran as a leading offender of human rights norms in the world. More specifically, we are very much concerned that Canada has yet to institute a moratorium against the deportation of refugees to Iran.

As you are well aware, the principle that refugees should not be returned to any country in which they could face the prospect of inhumane or humiliating treatment is well recognized in law and practise. Indeed, the UNHCR as a matter of routine practise, as well as a number of countries have adopted case law prohibiting the repatriation of refugees to countries where they may encounter hardship. In addition, Canada currently has in place a moratorium against sending refugees back to Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, and Zimbabwe.

Given the complete absence of any semblance of a rule of law in Iran, we would be remiss if we did not request that the Canadian Government immediately cease deporting all individuals back to that country. At a time when the Canadian Government has issued a travel advisory urging Canadians against visiting Iran, it would indeed be a cruel travesty to turn a blind eye towards the uncertain future that could await any refused refugee applicant sent back to that country. Moreover, given Canada's vocal condemnation of Iran and its decision to sever all diplomatic relations with that country, one cannot deny that all individuals, even those with the remotest ties to Canada, face a heightened risk of being targeted by Iranian authorities upon their return.

We firmly believe that it is high time for the Canadian Government to display moral clarity and act with the utmost vigilance to forestall the possibility that any individual will be put in harms way by being deported to Iran.

Regrettably, any individual who has followed the course of bilateral Canadian-Iranian diplomatic relations over the past decade has had to bear witness to a litany of tragedies and travesties. Let us hope these lessons behove us all to never throw caution to the wind.

We thank you in advance for considering this letter and request to meet with you at your earliest convenience to answer any questions or concerns you may have. We can be reached at (647) 868-4777

On behalf of the The No Deportation To Iran Campaign,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kavoos Soofi', written in a cursive style.

Kavoos Soofi

cc: The Right Honourable Stephen Harper

cc. The Honourable Jason Kenney