



## **Meeting Minutes**

### **ICC Board Meeting**

**Date: November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

#### **CONTACT**

Mehran Farazmand

Secretary and Board Member

Iranian Canadian Congress (ICC)

**Email:** [info@iccongress.ca](mailto:info@iccongress.ca)

#### **In Attendance:**

Mojtaba Adibrad

Bijan Ahmadi

Soudeh Ghasemi

Dorna Mojdami

Pouyan Tabasinejad

Mehran Farazmand

Tayaz Fakhri

Hooman Shirazi

Morvarid Zare Zade

#### **Meeting Minutes**

##### **1. Meeting agenda**

*Voting Result: All in favour (with some minor changes in order).*

##### **2. Point of orders**

Two of the board members (Soudeh Ghasemi, Pouyan Tabasinejad) talked about their complaints regarding alleged violations of the Code of Conduct of the ICC by Hooman Shirazi. (The Code of Conduct was adopted unanimously by the ICC Board in its first sessions of the 2017-2018 term



and was based on an earlier version that the ICC board has prepared in early years of establishing the organization.)

The first complaint brought by Soudeh Ghasemi was regarding comments from Hooman Shirazi in a previous board meeting. Ms. Ghasemi said that the comments were extremely disrespectful toward her and unacceptable of an ICC board member and believes that the behavior of Mr. Shirazi is against the Code of Conduct of the ICC and the procedural rules the ICC has for running its board meetings.

The second complaint was from Pouyan Tabasinejad. Mr. Tabasinejad mentioned that Hooman Shirazi made accusations against him in a public Facebook post for Mr. Tabasinejad's personal trip to Iran to visit his family couple of months ago. Mr. Tabasinejad believes the baseless accusations are against the interests of the organization and Mr. Shirazi's behavior and actions in spreading false information and accusing another board member is violation of the Code of Conduct.

The complaints will be reviewed as per the adopted Code of Conduct and the results will be available in future minutes.

The board emphasized on importance of abiding by the Code of Conduct to have a respectful, ethical and productive work environment.

### **3. Policy Report**

#### **a. Presentation at Canadian Heritage Committee**

ICC received an invitation to attend Parliament to present before Canadian Heritage committee. Soudeh and Pouyan attended on behalf of the ICC. It was part of consultation about the Bill M103. The presentation was mostly about the discrimination against Iranian-Canadians in Canada. In the Q&A part most questions were again regarding discrimination against ethnic communities in Canada but three of the Conservative MPs asked questions unrelated to the subject of the meeting and about discrimination against minorities in Iran.



The board thanked Soudeh and Pouyan for their presentation and suggested a Farsi report to be prepared about the presentation. The board also provided constructive feedback about the content of the presentation and the responses provided especially about the unrelated questions asked by the Conservative MPs. In particular, Tayaz remarked that when faced with questions on Iran, we need to point out to lack of relevance to the topic of the session; and even though issues related to the human rights in Iran and other places in the World are of significance for all Iranians, we are here to uphold the interests of Canadians from Iranian descent, therefore we will be pleased to answer the questions only in this framework.

Some of the board members suggested that for future meetings we need to be more prepared to address similar questions.

#### **b. Senator Linda Frum's Comments**

Senator Linda Frum in her speech at the Senate of Canada referred to Iran and Iranians as a “malign nation”. The ICC contacted Senator Frum and strongly objected to her comments. As Senator Frum refused to apologize and accept her disrespect toward our community the ICC launched a campaign asking the community to contact Senator Frum and other Senators representing their jurisdiction urging Senator Frum to apologize and correct her comments. Over 2000 Iranian Canadians used the ICC tool to email and call their Senators and Linda Frum. 4 Iranian Canadian politicians responded to our requests and provided public statements and NDP also reacted to ICC's requests. The NDP Foreign Affairs Critic released a brief statement condemning Senator Frum's comments. The responses to the requests sent from the ICC to politicians to react and provide public statements regarding Frum's comments is available in the appendix of this minute.

#### **4. November 12<sup>th</sup> Event (about Iran – Canada Relations)**

Bijan explained about the answers he received from the organizers about the details and the format of the event. The board discussed pros and cons of attending the event. The response will



be sent to the organizers in an official email from the ICC spokesperson. (The response is attached to this minutes)

Bijan, Pouyan, Soudeh, Dorna, Mojtaba & Mehran voted against attending the event. Tayaz and Morvarid voted in favour. Hooman recused himself of voting because of his conflict of interest given that he is an organizer of the Nov 12<sup>th</sup> event as well.

Some of the board members in this meeting and previous meeting discussing Nov 12<sup>th</sup> event also discussed Hooman Shirazi's involvement as an organizer in in the Nov 12<sup>th</sup> event. Board members mentioned that according to the Code of Conduct a board member of the ICC should not put himself or herself in a conflict of interest position and should put the interests of the ICC and his/her involvement as a board member in the ICC prior to other interests and other involvements as per the code of conduct. These board members said that the minimum expectation from Hooman Shirazi would be to inform and consult the board of directors about his intention to be part of Nov 12<sup>th</sup> organizing committee before the board members would find out from public statements and invitation to the organization.

#### **5. Discussion Session (November 5<sup>th</sup>)**

The board thanked Tayaz for organizing and moderating the first community roundtable of the ICC and provided some feedback (about the technical issues, time management, media protocol, etc.) for improvement in organizing of the next roundtables. PR will publish the video by the end of the week. The ICC board decided to provide budget to purchase camera and some related equipment for video recording of the ICC events including the next roundtables. The next session will be held on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### **6. Next meeting**

Next board meeting will be scheduled later to be held in the ICC office.

## جلسه هیات مدیره کنگره ایرانیان کانادا

ششم ماه نوامبر 2017

### اعضای حاضر:

بیژن احمدی	مجتبی ادیب راد	سوده قاسمی
پویان طبسی نژاد	مهران فرازمنند	درنا مجدی
تایاز فخری	هومن شیرازی	مروارید زارع زاده

### صورت جلسه

#### 1. برنامه جلسه

به اتفاق آرا (با اعمال چند تغییر جزئی در ترتیب موارد) موافقت شد.

#### 2. تذکرات آیین نامه ای

دو تن از اعضای هیات مدیره (سوده قاسمی و پویان طبسی نژاد) اعتراض خود را به اتهامات بی اساس هومن شیرازی مطرح و آنها را مغایر منشور اخلاقی کنگره اعلام کردند. (منشور اخلاقی که در جلسات اولیه هیات مدیره دوره کنونی به اتفاق آرا تصویب شد، مبتنی بر نسخه اولیه ای است که در سالهای نخستین تاسیس کنگره تهیه شده بود)

اعتراض سوده قاسمی مربوط به اظهارات هومن در جلسه قبلی بود که سوده آن را غیرمحترمانه و غیرقابل قبول در سطح هیات مدیره دانست. خاتم قاسمی معتقد است برخورد آقای شیرازی در تضاد با منشور اخلاقی و آیین نامه جلسات هیات مدیره است.

اعتراض دوم مربوط به پویان طبسی نژاد بود که مربوط می شد به اتهاماتی که هومن شیرازی، در یک پست فیس بوکی عمومی که به سفر شخصی پویان به ایران برای ملاقات بستگانش اشاره شده بود، مطرح کرده بود. آقای طبسی نژاد معتقد است این اتهامات بی اساس با ارزش های کنگره در تضاد بوده و برخورد و اقدامات آقای شیرازی در ترویج این اطلاعات نادرست و اتهام به یک عضو دیگر هیات مدیره، تخطی از منشور اخلاقی است.

اعتراضات مطرح شده، براساس منشور اخلاقی مصوب بررسی شده و در صورت جلسات بعدی منعکس خواهد شد. هیات مدیره بر رعایت منشور اخلاقی و حفظ محیط کاری محترمانه، اخلاقی و کارآمد تاکید دارد.

### **3. گزارش سیاستگزاری**

#### **الف) گزارش به کمیته میراث فرهنگی کانادا**

از کنگره ایرانیان دعوت شده بود در جلسه کمیته میراث فرهنگی مجلس فدرال کانادا شرکت کند. سوده و پویان به عنوان نمایندگان کنگره در این جلسه حضور یافتند. این برنامه بخشی از مشاوره در مورد لایحه M103 محسوب می شد. مطلب ارائه شده عمدتاً در مورد تبعیض علیه ایرانی کانادایی ها در کانادا بود. در بخش پرسش و پاسخ نیز سوال و جوابها غالباً به تبعیض علیه گروههای اقلیت در کانادا مربوط می شد. معهداً، سه تن از نمایندگان محافظه کار سوالاتی خارج از موضوع و در رابطه با تبعیض علیه اقلیتها در ایران مطرح نمودند.

هیات مدیره ضمن تشکر از سوده و پویان، پیشنهاد نمود یک گزارش فارسی از جلسه مذکور تهیه و ارائه شود. برخی پیشنهادات در مورد این گزارش و سوالات نامرتب نمایندگان محافظه کار مطرح گردید. بطور خاص، تایاز به این موضوع اشاره کرد که در زمان مواجهه با سوالاتی در مورد ایران، لازم است به نامرتب بودن آن به موضوع جلسه اشاره شود و اینکه اگرچه وضعیت حقوق بشر در ایران و سایر نقاط جهان برای همه ایرانیان مهم است، حضور ما در این جلسه برای محافظت از منافع کانادایی های ایرانی تبار است و لذا ما خشنود خواهیم بود که پاسخگوی سوالاتی در این حوزه باشیم.

برخی از اعضای هیات مدیره نیز به لزوم آمادگی بیشتر در جلسات مشابه آتی در صورت مواجهه با سوالات مشابه اشاره کردند.

#### **ب) اظهارات سناتور لیندا فرام**

سناتور لیندا فرام در سخنانش در سنای کانادا، ایران و ایرانیان را "ملتی بدذات" نامید. کنگره ایرانیان کانادا طی تماس با سناتور لیندا فرام به اظهارات او اعتراض نمود. به دنبال خودداری سناتور لیندا فرام از عذرخواهی و پذیرش بی احترامی اش به جامعه ایرانیان کانادا، کنگره کمپینی را راه اندازی نمود تا از جامعه ایرانی بخواهد با سناتور فرام و سایر سناتورهای نواحی خود تماس گرفته و خواستار عذرخواهی و تصحیح از سوی سناتور فرام شوند. بیش از دو هزار نفر از ایرانی کانادایی ها با استفاده از متن پیشنهادی کنگره با سناتور فرام و سایر سناتورها تماس گرفتند. چهار سیاستمدار ایرانی کانادایی نیز به این درخواست پاسخ داده و بیانیه هایی صادر نمودند. حزب دموکراتیک نوین نیز به این موضوع واکنش نشان داد. مسوول روابط خارجی این حزب بیانیه ای در انتقاد از اظهارات سناتور فرام صادر نمود. پاسخ های سیاستمداران ایرانی کانادایی به درخواستهای کنگره در مورد واکنش به اظهارات سناتور فرام به پیوست این صورت جلسه آورده شده است.

#### **4. برنامه 12 نوامبر (درباره رابط ایران و کانادا)**

بیژن در مورد پاسخهای دریافتی از برگزارکنندگان برنامه درباره جزئیات و ساختار آن توضیح داد. هیات مدیره جوانب مثبت و منفی حضور در برنامه را مورد بحث قرار داد. پاسخ به برگزارکنندگان در قالب یک ایمیل رسمی از سوی سخنگوی کنگره اعلام خواهد شد. (متن پاسخ به پیوست صورت جلسه می باشد)

بیژن، پویان، سوده، درنا، مجتبی و مهران مخالف و تایاز و مروارید موافق شرکت در برنامه بودند. هومن، با توجه به اینکه یکی از برگزارکنندگان برنامه بود و به دلیل تضاد منافع از شرکت در رای گیری امتناع کرد.

برخی از اعضای هیات مدیره در طی دو جلسه ای که بحث برنامه 12 نوامبر در جریان بود، به موضوع نقش هومن شیرازی در برنامه مذکور به عنوان برگزارکننده اشاره نمودند. براساس منشور اخلاقی کنگره، عضو هیات مدیره نمی بایست خود را در شرایط تضاد منافع قرار دهد و اولویتهای کنگره و نقش خود در آن را مقدم بر موارد دیگر (که ممکن است با آن سازگار نباشد) بشمارد. حداقل انتظار از هومن این بود که در مورد مشارکت خود در برنامه مذکور هیات مدیره را مطلع نموده و طرف مشورت قرار می داد، پیش از آنکه هیات مدیره از طریق اعلان عمومی و دعوتنامه از این مشارکت مطلع شود.

#### **5. جلسه گفتگو (5 نوامبر)**

هیات مدیره از تایاز بخاطر برگزاری و مدیریت نخستین جلسه گفتگوی عمومی کنگره تشکر نموده و پیشنهاداتی (درباره رفع مشکلات فنی، مدیریت زمان، آیین نامه رسانه ای و ...) برای برگزاری بهتر جلسات آتی ارائه نمود. روابط عمومی ویدیوی جلسه را تا پایان هفته پخش خواهد کرد. هیات مدیره تصمیم گرفت تا بودجه ای برای خرید دوربین و تجهیزات مرتبط با فیلم برداری از گردهمایی های کنگره و جلسات گفتگو اختصاص دهد. جلسه گفتگوی بعدی برای ده دسامبر برنامه ریزی شده است.

#### **6. جلسه آتی هیات مدیره**

زمان جلسه بعدی هیات مدیره که در دفتر کنگره خواهد بود بعدا هماهنگ خواهد شد.



## Appendix 1

### **Communications with Members of Parliament regarding Senator Frum's disrespectful comments toward Iranian-Canadians:**

Email to MP Ehsassi, MPP Moridi, Member of Quebec National Assembly Amir Khadi. We have been informed that MP Jowhari has been made aware of the comments of Frum and our campaign and has decided to release a statement accordingly as such similar email was not sent to him.

Nov 1, 2017

From Pouyan Tabasinejad, ICC Policy Chair:

Dear Mr. Ehsassi/Dear Dr. Moridi/Dear Dr. Khadir,

I am writing you today to inform you of a discriminatory statement made against the Iranian community by Senator Linda Frum on October 26th, 2017.

During debate on Bill S219 (Non-nuclear Sanctions Against Iran Act) Senator Frum said the following about Iran and Iranians:

"Bill S-219 is grounded in a moral and ethical purpose, and that is to monitor one of the most malign nations in the world and to calibrate our nation's sanctions accordingly."

Senator Frum's discriminatory and anti-Iranian statement constitutes a tremendous disrespect towards the Iranian-Canadian community.

We are requesting that you, as an Iranian-Canadian elected official, release a statement condemning these derogatory comments by Senator Frum and asking her to apologize, as soon as is possible. Member of Parliament Majid Jowhari has released a statement condemning Senator Frum's discriminatory comments and we hope that we can also count on you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Pouyan Tabasinejad

Policy Chair

Iranian Canadian Congress





Response from Dr. Amir Khadir on Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017:

Good morning

We will issue an official statement this morning!

Amir Khadir

Response from Dr. Reza Moridi on Nov 5, 2017:

Dear Mr. Tabasinejad:

Thank you for bringing this point to my attention. I wrote a letter to Senator Frum requesting her for a clarification of the use the word “nation” in her remarks. The letter is posted on my Facebook.

Regards,

Reza

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Reza Moridi, MPP

Follow up email to MP Ali Ehsassi from Pouyan Tabasinejad on Nov 3, 2017,

Hello Mr. Ehsassi,

We are still awaiting your response on this issue. MP Jowhari and Minister Moridi have both released statements and our community members are waiting for your condemnation of Senator Frum's derogatory comments about our community.

Sincerely,

Pouyan Tabasinejad

ICC Policy Chair



Response from MP Ali Ehsassi to Pouyan Tabasinejad on Nov 5, 2017:

Hello Mr. Tabasinejad,

Apologies for the delay in my response, but I am out of the country.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that I have very fundamental disagreements with the Conservative Party, and by extension Senator Frum. These differences are as you can expect, particularly pronounced in the area of foreign affairs.

That said, I believe that the controversy you reference is based on a misconstrued and misinterpreted understanding of the terminology she used.

Had she disparaged individual Iranians, either the estimated 300,000 Iranian-Canadians residing in Canada, or any other, you certainly could have counted on me to doggedly stand up for a rectification.

None of the numerous individuals I have consulted agree to the interpretation you have accorded the term maligned nation.

However, I have refrained from publicizing my very different interpretation of the above referenced terms so as not to create any additional discord in the Iranian community.

It would very much compromise my ethics to add fuel to the fire by unduly complicating or maligning any organization or individual, including yours or MP Jowhari's.

Regards,

Ali Ehsassi

Response from Pouyan Tabasinejad to MP Ali Ehsassi about the comments he mentioned in his email of Nov 5<sup>th</sup>. This email was sent on Nov 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017:

Hello Mr. Ehsassi,

Thank you for replying. However, we have deep concerns about your approach to this issue.

Firstly, for the record Senator Frum published the transcript of her speech and asserted that the Senate transcript incorrectly recorded the word "maligned" whereas "malign" is the word she used to refer to the



nation of Iran. This makes her insult to Iran and Iranians even more egregious and worthy of response from our elected officials.

Over the last three days, over 2000 Iranian-Canadians from across Canada, including many in your riding, have objected to Senator Frum's derogatory comments. In response to this, all of our elected representatives except yourself have released statements. Majid Jowhari and Amir Khadir have categorically condemned Senator Frum. Minister Moridi has asked Senator Frum to clarify her comments and has recognized that our community is offended by her words.

Clearly, there is a consensus in our community that Senator Frum's comments are unacceptable and need to be retracted and apologized for. It is unfortunate that you are refusing to accept this and have instead asserted that the Senator's comments do not constitute an offense, taking the view that is only shared in our community by controversial groups such as the NCRI/MEK.

Unfortunately, this is only the latest time that we have seen you fail to adequately use your position to defend and advance the interests of the Iranian-Canadian community. It is equally unfortunate that you blame others for this failure, including the ICC, despite our consistent efforts to work with you for our community.

As an advocacy organization, it is our duty to keep our politicians accountable, and this includes elected Iranian-Canadian politicians like yourself. If you'd like to publish any statement regarding this issue, please do so by end of today Sunday Nov 5, 2017.

Sincerely,

Pouyan Tabasinejad

ICC Policy Chair

On Nov 6, 2017 MP Ali Ehsassi released a statement regarding this subject and the following email was sent to him from Pouyan Tabasinejad:

Hello Mr. Ehsassi,

I am glad to see that you have reversed your position and asked Senator Frum to clarify her comments.

Sincerely,

Pouyan Tabasinejad



**Appendix 2:**

**Response to Mr. Shahram Tabe-Mohammadi regarding the invitation to Nov 12<sup>th</sup> panel discussion on Canada-Iran relations:**

Mr. Tabe-Mohammadi,

Regarding the event on Nov 12th, the board of directors of the ICC has decided not to send any official representative or spokesperson from the organization. We thank you for the invitation.

The board believes that the organizers have unfortunately failed to put together an unbiased panel that provides equal and fair opportunity to the diversity of groups and opinions in our community. The topic of the discussion, especially in the second part of the panel, is regarding the ICC, yet the list of panelists invited, and as a consequence the time allocated, is overwhelmingly in favor of panelists who oppose the current ICC's work for Canada-Iran relations and its work against sanctions on Iran.

The biased nature of the event is also evident in the composition of the organizing team. Perhaps with the exception of one of your organizing members the rest have publicly expressed their opposition to the current policies of the ICC.

A professional panel discussion requires the organizers to respect certain rules to provide equal opportunity to different sides to freely present their opinions. None of these basic rules were respected in this event. Perhaps the most unprofessional action since you have sent us the invitation has been the regular statements that you have posted on social media attacking myself and MP Jowhari for not responding or not participating and talking about us as being afraid to face questions or as intending to deceive the public, and so on.

In the past ~18 months that my colleagues and I have been running the ICC board we have organized multiple events for the ICC members and all Iranian-Canadians to meet and ask us questions about our work and to provide us with their feedback and opinion. On a regular basis we have been in contact with the Persian and English speaking media and have answered questions regarding our position on Canada-Iran relations. We have also clearly explained our position regarding Canada's sanctions policy toward Iran (and specifically Bill S219) in different events, interviews and in our presentation at the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. Our position is clear. The ICC advocates for re-establishing diplomatic relations with Iran and the ICC is



against sanctions on Iran that by and large harm the Iranian-Canadian community. I remind you that all signs show that the community supports us on this issue -- the petition asking for re-engagement initiated by the ICC gathered nearly 16,000 from Iranian-Canadians across Canada, while another petition opposing re-engagement with Iran and the reopening of the embassies only gathered 600 signatures. The results of our last AGM and also recent surveys we have conducted also show that the majority of the ICC members and Iranian-Canadians in general support our policies. On the issue of Canada-Iran relations we will continue our advocacy for re-engagement and reopening of the embassies.

As always we welcome all questions and comments; in addition, if any question or comment from the panelists or your audience on Nov 12th require an official response, we will promptly provide that response through our official communication channels.

Kind Regards,

Bijan Ahmadi

**President**

**Iranian Canadian Congress**

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