



President's report

Annual General Meeting

December 13, 2020

ICC conducted surveys and consultations in 2019 and 2020



Consultation with the community is an important pillar of the ICC's activities. In the past two years, the ICC has had two major consultation efforts:

- January 2019: [Online survey](#) for ICC members and general public about ICC priorities for the Federal Election 2019:

In this survey Iranian Canadian respondents wanted the federal government to:

- Re-establish relations between Iran and Canada
- Ease immigration rules, especially for international students
- Address climate change
- Address anti-Iranian discrimination

ICC conducted surveys and consultations in 2019 and 2020 (cont.)



- August 2020: [Online survey](#) about the impact of COVID-19 on Iranian-Canadians and their expectation from the ICC:

In this survey, Iranian-Canadian respondents:

- Indicated that their biggest concerns during COVID were financial in nature
- Are following COVID social distancing guidelines
- Desire financial advice as well as psychological counselling services
- Are concerned about the pandemic in Iran under sanctions

Due to the workload of the legal case the current board wasn't able to conduct more frequent consultations. ICC should continue consultations and update its priorities on a regular basis.

ICC priorities



The ICC's efforts in 2018-2020 have been focused on the following priorities:

- Advocating for fair policies for recent Iranian-Canadian immigrants.
- Combating all forms of discrimination against our community.
- Increasing the participation of Iranian-Canadians in the Canadian political process.
- Advocating for diplomacy between Canada and Iran, reopening of the embassies and for the right of Iranian-Canadians to access consular services.
- Combatting and raising awareness about the impact of unjust US sanctions on Iranian people and the Iranian diaspora including Iranian-Canadians.
- Combatting foreign funded/affiliated influence and smear operations against Iranian-Canadian pro-peace activists.
- Fighting corrupt money in Canada.
- Mobilizing support from Iranian-Canadians for charitable causes at times of crisis and natural disaster in Iran.
- Helping the Iranian Canadian community during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Raising awareness about human rights cases related to Iranian-Canadians.
- Advocating for full investigation and accountability for Flight 752.

Supporting Recent Iranian Canadian Immigrants



The Canadian immigration system can be hard for any immigrant, but Iranians unfortunately often face far more difficulties because of their country of origin. In the past 2 years, the ICC has worked hard to ameliorate these issues:

- Since late 2017, Iranian-Canadians with student & work visas reported they were facing wait times of nearly three years on average to receive their Permanent Residency (PR), far longer than other nations
- Beginning in Spring of 2018: The ICC contacted Canadian authorities on multiple occasions regarding the above, [meeting them](#) in Ottawa and [presenting before Parliament](#) on this issue, as a result of which we received a reply that the wait times had been significantly [reduced by](#) more than a year and that [nearly 4,000](#) individuals received their PR status
- February 2019: In Quebec, the ICC [spoke forcefully](#) against Bill 9, which would purge nearly 20,000 PR applications, including those of Iranian-Canadians
- June 2020: Likewise the ICC also [opposed changes](#) to Quebec's PEQ program, which would harm countless Iranian-Canadian international students
- December 2019: The [ICC wrote](#) to more than 50 Canadian university officers asking them to grant extensions to Iran-based applicants who have not had access to the Internet due to the #IranianProtests

Combating Discrimination



As relatively recent immigrants to Canada, Iranian-Canadians face discrimination. In the past two years, the ICC has fought this discrimination as a crucial part of its mandate:

- To fulfil our mandate of advocating for Iranian-Canadians, the ICC vigilantly opposes discrimination against members of the community, for example:
- The [attack](#) on Saye Sky
- The [exclusive presence](#) of voices unrepresentative of the Iranian-Canadian community on the CBC
- [Demanding](#) Canadian officials defend Iranian-Canadians who were being discriminated against at the US-Canada border
- [Condemning a racist petition](#) by Rebel Media head Ezra Levant that called for the expulsion of Iranian-Canadian international students from Canada
- Demanding that [Amazon remove](#) a hateful anti-Iranian product from their platform

Iranian-Canadian Political Participation



In the past two years and as a crucial part of its mandate, the ICC has attempted to increase the political participation of Iranian-Canadians

- For the 2019 Federal Election, the ICC launched its [Election Centre](#), where Iranian-Canadians could access information on how, where, and why to vote, including [where the major federal parties](#) stand on issues important to the Iranian Canadian community
- The ICC also held a [Community Roundtable](#) for the 2019 Federal Election, allowing Iranian-Canadians to speak about their views on who to vote for and why.
- For the 2018 Municipal election candidates, the ICC held a [Meet & Greet](#) for Iranian Canadian candidates.

Iran-Canada Relations



In the past two years, the ICC has done all it can to ensure that the federal government remains committed to diplomacy with Iran and gained bipartisan support for engagement.

- Community advocacy campaigns:
 - [No Sanctions, No War](#) Campaign
 - [Thank you Justin Trudeau](#) for standing for peace Campaign
 - [Help Iranian Students](#) During COVID Campaign
- Organizing expert panel discussions on Parliament Hill about Canada's Iran policy:
 - [Discussing Canada's Iran Policy](#)
 - [Canada's Role in the Middle East Panel](#)

Advocacy Against Sanctions and War



In the last two years, the ICC has advocated against sanctions and war in the context of Trump's "Maximum Pressure" campaign, using everything from letters to officials and rallies attended by hundreds to do so:

- May 2018: Organizing a letter signed by [10 Canadian organizations](#) asking the Canadian government to support the Iran Nuclear Deal
- August 2018: Asking then-foreign minister Chrystia Freeland to support the Iran Nuclear Deal, which resulted in [this response](#) supporting the Deal
- January 2019: [Campaign](#) asking Canada to stand against Trump's unilateral sanctions on Iran.
- October 2019: [Letter](#) signed by 6 Canadian organizations asking Canada to stand for peace
- September 2020: Standing against Trump's [unilateral actions](#) at the UN Security Council
- January 2020: Anti-war protests in [Montreal](#) and [Toronto](#)

Combatting Foreign-Affiliated Smear Campaigns against Pro-Peace Iranian-Canadians



In the past two years, Iranian-Canadian pro-peace advocates and political candidates have faced concerning attacks from shadowy foreign-funded attacks. The ICC has done all it can to fight and raise awareness of these attacks:

- October 2018: [Letter to Minister of Public Safety](#) around attack by Australian-based “Imam” Tawhidi on the ICC and its volunteers
- June 2019: Asking the Ministers of Public Safety and Democratic Institutions to combat [election interference](#) by the formerly listed terrorist group MEK (or Mujahedin-e-Khalgh)
- October 2019: Condemnation of [foreign linked online attacks](#) seemingly tied to Saudi Arabia on an Iranian-Canadian MP

Fighting Corrupt Money in Canada



Unfortunately, Canada has become a destination for corrupt money leaving Iran. For the past two years, the ICC has attempted to combat this trend and see those embezzlers and corrupt officials are brought to justice and cannot invest or reside in Canada:

- March 2019: [Petition](#) asking Canada to investigate Reza Khavari and Marjan Aleagha
- August 2020: [Letter](#) sent to Canadian Ministers August 2020 asking them to investigate the cases of corrupt money entering Iran
- September 2020: [Campaign](#) asking MPs to launch an investigate recent cases of individuals who have been accused of leveraging Canada's international credibility and sound economy to launder money
- Despite the fact that some of these individuals have [threatened to sue the ICC](#), we continue to advance this morally correct mission

Human Rights



The last two years have seen Iranians and Iranian-Canadians not only harmed by war and sanctions, but also facing human rights violations. The ICC has consistently attempted to address these issues in whatever ways possible:

- June 2018: asked for [immediate return](#) of Maryam Mombeini, who has not been allowed to leave Iran for more than two years now.
- November 2019: [demanded](#) that the Iranian people's rights to protest and express themselves be respected
- November 2019: [held vigil](#) for the victims of the protests in Iran

Helping Iran at Times of Crisis



In the last 2 years, Iranians in Iran faced multiple tragedies, from natural disasters to medical shortages. The ICC has attempted to not only advocate with the Canadian government to address these crises, but has also directly aided in fundraising:

- April 2019: [Contacted Canadian Red Cross](#) and created a joint initiative to fundraise for flash flood affecting Iranians
- April 2019: [Asked the Canadian government](#) to provide support through Canadian Red Cross to Iran during flash floods
- Through these efforts, ICC supporters and the Iranian-Canadian community [helped raise \\$150,000](#), which helped the Red Cross to provide:
 - ✓ *296K ppl with emergency shelter*
 - ✓ *29K ppl with health interventions*
 - ✓ *216K food parcels*
- Additionally, after the request from the ICC, the Government of Canada announced that in response to the floods in Iran, [\\$250,000 has been made available to Canadian Red Cross](#) to provide emergency assistance such as shelter/livelihoods/protection in impacted regions in Iran.

Flight 752



The shooting down of Flight 752 was a tremendous tragedy for the Iranian-Canadian community. The ICC attempted to do all in its power to help with the tragedy and advocate on behalf of the victims and their families:

January 2020:

- [Initial statement](#) condemning the shootdown, the lies about it afterward, and calling for a full investigation
- [Vigil](#) in collaboration with Iranian-Canadian student organizations from the University of Toronto and York:
- [Letter](#) to PM Trudeau asking Canadian government to help provide accountability, transparency, and justice to the victims and their families.
- [Advocacy campaign](#) asking Canadian politicians for accountability, transparency, and justice for Flight 752
- February 2020: [40th day statement](#) recommitting to transparency, accountability and justice for the victims of Flight 752 and their families and condemning the actions of Iranian officials around the shootdown.
- March 2020: [60th day statement](#) calling again for a full and transparent investigation of the tragedy based on international rules and regulations.

Helping Iran and Iranian-Canadians During COVID-19 Pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused much hardship not only for Iranians living in Canada, but Iranians in Iran as well. The ICC has tried to help both groups as much as it could over the past year:

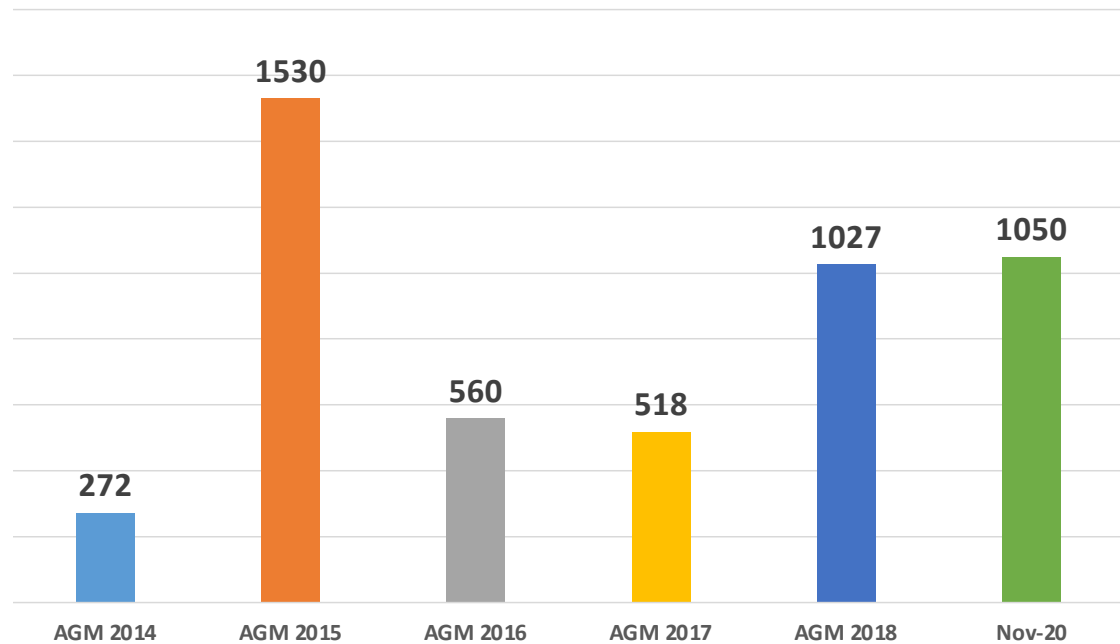
- February 2020: Asking Canadian government to help with Iranian-Canadians trapped in Iran after the border shutdown. [Initial statement](#), [demand from government](#), [launching petition with LeadNow to bring home Canadians trapped in Iran](#)
- April 2020: [Asking](#) Iranian-Canadians to support local businesses during COVID-19 crisis
- June 2020: [Advocacy campaign](#) to help international students during COVID-19
- March 2020: [Asking Canadian government](#) and Iranian Red Cross to help Iran during COVID-19 pandemic
- March 2020: [Signing open letter](#) to end US sanctions on Iran during COVID-19 crisis
- August 2020: [Online survey](#) about the impact of COVID-19 on Iranian-Canadians and their expectation from the ICC
- Working with other organizations to gather financial support for Iranian people during COVID: <https://persiangulfcharity.com/covid19/>

Expanding ICC Membership



This year, we are happy to report that the membership has grown considerably:

- A large membership is a sign of a healthy organization and a healthy Iranian-Canadian community.
- **We are happy to report that the ICC's membership is the highest it's been in 4 years.**



Legal action 2019-2020

- Status of the legal Payami et al. v ICC:
 - Initial action was conditionally settled
 - Payami et al. motion of Nov 2 against ICC was dismissed by courts. Cost discussions ongoing.
- The legal case put tremendous pressure on the ICC board workload and on financial resources of the organization
- The board tried its best to reduce its costs during this process.
- The board and ICC supporters donated towards the legal cost.
- Suggested next steps: review and update bylaws, include additional conflict resolution mechanisms in the bylaws.



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