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NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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A New Year Pledge

This Sunday marks three years since a pair of Iranian missiles struck Ukrainian Airlines Flight PS752 shortly after takeoff from Tehran, killing all 176 people on board, including 85 Canadian citizens and permanent residents – some from the North Shore.

Like everyone in our community, my North Shore parliamentary colleagues Terry Beech and Patrick Weiler and I continue to grieve the tragic loss of these innocent lives and Iran's lack of accountability, even as we witness unrelenting and escalating examples of Iran's brutality against its own people – in particular, women and girls.

Tens of thousands of Iranian citizens have been imprisoned in recent months for protesting the regime's violence and egregious human rights violations. Many hundreds have been killed, including children.

Our support for the Iranian people to live their lives free from persecution is unwavering. We hear their powerful voices, and we will continue to amplify them wherever we can.

Legal accountability

Last week - inspired in part by the unrelenting quest for justice from the families of those killed in the downing of Flight PS752 – Canada, Sweden, Ukraine and Britain started a process to hold Iran legally accountable under a treaty signed in 1971.

It was designed to protect commercial aircraft from attack by requiring signatories to punish those who commit offences involving airplanes.

All four countries and Iran signed the treaty. If arbitration cannot settle the dispute within six months, Iran can be taken to the International Court of Justice.

UN Resolution

We are appalled by Iran's wrongful imprisonment and execution of protestors. On December 16th, Canada introduced to the United Nations a resolution to reaffirm our commitment to human rights for the people of Iran and condemn the application of the death penalty – a resolution that the UN General Assembly adopted.

Political sponsorship

Members of the Iranian community in BC have called for Canadian parliamentarians to commit to do whatever we can to help prevent the executions of those condemned to death, torture or ongoing imprisonment by the Iranian regime.

In Europe, political sponsorships of individual detainees by elected officials

have already proved effective in bringing their plight to the forefront by declaring to the regime that the world is watching it.

Last week, I, along with eight other BC Liberal MPs, publicly committed to sponsoring and speaking the names – on an ongoing basis – of 19 individual detainees chosen through organizations which monitor human rights violations in Iran.

We will function as their advocates, keeping track of their lives and welfare on our social media channels and other public platforms – maintaining a sustained spotlight on Iran's ongoing human rights violations and – hopefully – helping to ensure the safety of these brave individuals.

We have chosen to sponsor in this way several physicians and medical students targeted for treating those injured in protests, as well as some of the young people singled out with severe penalties for raising their voices.

They are:

- *Dr. Farhad Meysami, & Mohammad Ghobadlou* – sponsor: John Aldag, MP
- *Iman Navabi*-Surgery Resident, & *Fahimeh Karimi*, mother of three – Terry Beech, MP
- *Dr. Zabra Hasani Abiz, & Sahand Noormohammadzadeh* – Hedy Fry, MP
- *Dr. Behnam Ohadi, & Ali Rakhshani*, 17 – Ken Hardie, MP
- *Reza Arya*, father of two, & *Tohid Darvishiln* – Ron McKinnon, MP
- *Dr. Homayoun Eftekharian Nia, & Amir Nasr-Azadani* – Taleeb Noormohamed, MP
- *Dr. Alreza Eradati, & Hossein Mohammadi* – Randeep Sarai, MP
- *Mehdi Memar Rast*-Medical Student, & *Mohsen Rezazadeh Gharagholou* – Patrick Wieler, MP
- *Dr. Hamid Ghare-Hassanlou*, spouse *Farzaneh Qareh Hasanlu, & Mohammad Rakhshani*, 16 – Jonathan Wilkinson, MP

As we start this new year, let us resolve as Canadians to stand steadfast and united in our support of international conventions on human rights wherever they are suppressed – particularly the rights of women and girls, and rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association.

“Jin, jiyān, azadi!” — “Woman, life, freedom!”

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