



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Jonathan Wilkinson, MP North Vancouver

For immediate release: July 8, 2023



Letter declaring sponsorship of Toomaj Salehi by the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, MP

I, as a Member of the Canadian Parliament from British Columbia, Canada, hereby undertake the political sponsorship of Iranian performer and musician **Toomaj Salehi**, who is currently imprisoned by the government of Iran. Community members have called for my commitment to help prevent his potential execution, should the sham court that has convicted him consider the death penalty.

I know that endorsements by elected officials in Canada and other free-thinking countries have already brought the plight of detainees to the forefront and have declared to the regime that it is under scrutiny - that there are advocates keeping track of the lives and well-being of many of the victims of the violent crackdowns imposed by the ruling regime in Iran.

Toomaj Salehi is now one of these – he has been imprisoned since October 30th, 2022.

As many of you are acutely aware, the Iranian regime's brutality against its own people - in particular, women and girls - is unrelenting. Many young people have already suffered the death penalty, which we oppose in all circumstances for all people, everywhere. We voice together that we are appalled by Iran's wrongful imprisonment and execution of protestors.

- **I call on Iran to immediately establish a moratorium to halt all executions and to end this brutal and inhumane punishment.**
- **I call on the regime to release Toomaj Salehi, and to stop inventing crimes and convicting innocents to prop up their violent and inhumane government.**

I and my parliamentary colleagues, as individual Canadian Members of Parliament, have committed to speaking the names of Iranian detainees, to remind the Iranian government that we are watching, that the world is watching, and that we condemn Iran's ongoing human rights violations and threats to individual freedoms as well as regional peace and security.



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I therefore speak the names of others I have sponsored:

- **Dr. Hamid Ghareh Hassanlou**, the respected physician tortured in prison;
- his beloved wife, **Farzaneh Ghareh Hassanlou**, a laboratory technician, held in a remote jail;
- and teenager **Mohammad Rakhshani**, just 16 years of age when he and his brother were arrested last year.

I want to remind the Iranian regime that these people are not forgotten.

And that Toomaj Salehi joins them in our thoughts and in our hearts.

We are watching.

I want to remind the regime that my colleagues in government here in Canada and around the world see what is happening; we remember the individuals we have sponsored, and we condemn in the strongest terms the Iranian government's treatment of its own people.

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. That is why I am releasing this statement today.

We remind the Iranian regime that we will not lend credence to sham trials, to invented charges and to a lack of legal representation for these individuals and many others presently imprisoned by their own government.

We ask that Canadians stand strong and united in our support of international conventions on human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls, and rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association.

I will continue to speak the name of Toomaj Salehi. I and my fellow Canadians are watching and are supporting you, Toomaj.

Have courage.

Jonathan Wilkinson, MP North Vancouver