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Chair: Fayçal El-Khoury

Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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• (1540)

[*English*]

The Clerk of the Committee (Aimée Belmore): Honourable members of the subcommittee, I see a quorum.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(3)(a), as the clerk of the subcommittee, I will preside over the election of the chair and the vice-chairs.

I must inform members that the clerk of the subcommittee can receive motions only for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, entertain points of debate or participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Zuberi.

Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): I'd like to present a motion to have our colleague, MP El-Khoury, as chair of this subcommittee.

The Clerk: Thank you.

Are there any further motions?

I will now put the motion to the subcommittee. It has been moved by Mr. Zuberi that Mr. El-Khoury be elected chair of the subcommittee. Is it the pleasure of the subcommittee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: Thank you.

I declare the motion carried and Mr. El-Khoury duly elected chair of the subcommittee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Clerk: I invite Mr. El-Khoury to come and take the chair.

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everyone.

[*English*]

It's a great pleasure being with you.

Thank you for the confidence you have given me. I will do my best. Most of you know me very well. I will be fair. I will be honest. I am expecting every one of you to behave and act the same, as I'm sure we're all at the same level in this house.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

If the subcommittee is in agreement, I invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

Is there a motion?

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to congratulate you on your election. I'm delighted that you'll be chairing this extremely important subcommittee.

I would like to nominate Shuvaloy Majumdar for the position of first vice-chair of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights.

The Chair: Are there any further motions?

[*English*]

Is there any objection to the motion presented by Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe to elect Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar as vice-chair?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I declare the motion carried. Congratulations, Mr. Majumdar.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I'll let the clerk proceed with the election of the vice-chair.

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I'm now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

[*English*]

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): This subcommittee has been extremely well served by Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe. I nominate him as the second vice-chair.

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Majumdar that Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

• (1545)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe duly elected second vice-chair of the subcommittee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

The Chair: Can I have your attention please?

I have the following routine motion:

That the subcommittee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist in its work.

Is it the desire of the committee to adopt the motion?

The Chair: Mr. Zuberi.

Sameer Zuberi: Are we in open session now?

The Chair: Yes.

Sameer Zuberi: We're supposed to be in open session. I was just curious.

The Chair: I can't hear you properly.

Sameer Zuberi: I apologize. I'm a low talker, so that's why you can't hear me properly, but you answered my question.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Will any of you be moving the routine motions?

Sameer Zuberi: No.

Could you read this motion again?

The Chair: I can read the motions myself, or someone else can move them.

[*English*]

Go ahead, Mr. Majumdar.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: I would like to move a motion. That's what you're looking for, I understand.

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence published when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including two members of the opposition parties and two members of the government party.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead, Madam Tamara Kronis.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move:

That, when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct: (a) the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of whether quorum is present, (b) no substantive motion may be moved during such meetings.

The Chair: Is anyone opposed?

Did everyone hear the motion? Does everyone agree?

Anita, please go ahead.

Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): I want to double-check that all of these motions are the normal, ordinary ones that we pass at the beginning of every committee.

The Chair: Yes, I can confirm that.

Anita Vandenbeld: Thank you.

The Chair: Has everyone heard the motion by Madam Kronis?

Go ahead, Mr. Zuberi.

Sameer Zuberi: This is a normal, ordinary motion. The one here is a normal, ordinary motion.

The Chair: Yes.

Sameer Zuberi: Okay, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Davies.

Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC): Mr. Chair, I'd like to move a motion.

That witnesses—

• (1550)

The Chair: Just a moment, please. We have to approve the motion proposed by Madam Kronis.

Is anyone opposed? Is everyone agreed?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Davies.

Fred Davies: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to move a motion:

That witnesses be given five (5) minutes for their opening statements; that whenever possible, witnesses provide the subcommittee with their opening statements 72 hours in advance; that, at the discretion of the Chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated seven (7) minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows:

First Round: Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Québécois

And that thereafter five (5) minutes be allocated to each subsequent questioner in the following order:

Liberal Party, Conservative Party, Bloc Québécois

The Chair: Has everyone heard the motion proposed by Mr. Davies?

Is anyone opposed?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Can you go to the first one?

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Yes. I wanted to do just that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I would like to move the following motion:

That the subcommittee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the Chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

You heard the motion moved by Mr. Duceppe.

Is anyone opposed to the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Duceppe, the floor is yours.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, now that this motion has been agreed to, I think that we could ask the analysts to come sit with us. They received confirmation that they could do so.

The Chair: I would like to invite the analysts to come sit with us.

Your presence will add great value to this subcommittee.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Mr. Majumdar, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Shivaloy Majumdar: I'd like to move, regarding document distribution, the following motion:

That only the clerk of the subcommittee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the subcommittee and only when the documents are in both official languages; and that all documents submitted to the subcommittee in both official languages that do not come from a federal department, members' offices, or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau, be sent for linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members, and that the witnesses be advised accordingly.

The Chair: Thank you.

Has everyone listened to the motion proposed by Mr. Majumdar?

Is anyone opposed?

Sameer Zuberi: I did hear it, but normally we present text on paper for the motions.

You have them.

The Chair: Don't you have them?

Sameer Zuberi: That's fine. We've heard it read in.

Thank you.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I can give you mine.

We need someone to propose it in French also.

An hon. member: I'm doing that one next.

The Chair: Oh, thank you. Remember, I'm from Quebec.

Go ahead, Madam Kronis.

Tamara Kronis: I'd like to propose the next motion. It's one that's close to my heart.

[*Translation*]

I move:

That the clerk of the subcommittee, at the discretion of the Chair, be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the subcommittee.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kronis.

Everyone heard the motion moved by Ms. Kronis.

Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, since you like motions to be moved in French, I want to move the following motion. It concerns the travel, accommodation and living expenses of witnesses:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses not exceeding two representatives per organization; and that in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the Chair.

• (1555)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Everyone heard the motion moved by Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I don't think that this motion has been moved yet:

That, when travelling outside the Parliamentary Precinct: (a) the meeting begin after 15 minutes, regardless of whether quorum is present, (b) no substantive motion may be moved during such meetings.

The Chair: That isn't the right motion, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. We're at the motion concerning access to in camera meetings.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I'll give my turn to someone else, Mr. Chair. I'm a bit lost.

The Chair: Mr. Davies, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Fred Davies: Mr. Chair, I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each subcommittee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff member at in camera meetings and that one additional person from each House officers' office be allowed to be present.

That, during in camera meetings, subcommittee members may be informed by the subcommittee Chair of the Members of Parliament who have been designated as substitutes for permanent members, in order to know which Members of Parliament are authorized to speak and vote during these subcommittee meetings; and that only those who have been recognized and identified as such be authorized to speak, in keeping with the usual agreed rules of order and decorum.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davies.

Monsieur Brunelle-Duceppe, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to move the following motion, which concerns the transcripts of in camera meetings:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be securely retained by the subcommittee clerk for consultation by members of the subcommittee or by their staff; and that the analysts assigned to the subcommittee have access to the in camera transcripts.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe's motion was heard.

Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We'll move on to the next motion.

Mr. Zuberi, you have the floor.

[English]

Sameer Zuberi: Thank you.

[Translation]

The next motion is as follows:

[English]

That a 48-hour notice, interpreted as two nights, be required for any substantive motion to be moved in subcommittee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that:

(a) the notice be filed with the clerk of the subcommittee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Thursday, and no later than 2:30 p.m. on Friday;

(b) the motion be distributed to members and the offices of the whips of each recognized party in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour;

(c) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

Next is Mr. Majumdar.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: This is with respect to orders of reference from the House respecting bills.

I move:

That in relation to orders of reference from the House respecting Bills,

(a) The clerk of the subcommittee shall, upon the subcommittee receiving such an order of reference, write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the subcommittee to invite those members to file with the clerk of the subcommittee, in both official languages, any amendments to the bill, which is the subject of the said Order, which they would suggest that the subcommittee consider;

(b) Suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the subcommittee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given bill; and

(c) During the clause-by-clause consideration of a bill, the Chair shall allow a member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

That was a mouthful.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Majumdar.

Madam Kronis.

• (1600)

Tamara Kronis: I would like to move a motion.

[Translation]

The motion is as follows:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the subcommittee that the House Administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advise the subcommittee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

[English]

The Chair: You're doing a great job, Madam Kronis.

[Translation]

Tamara Kronis: I'm trying.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Congratulations.

Everyone heard the motion moved by Ms. Kronis. Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Zuberi.

[Translation]

Sameer Zuberi: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know whether the member participating by video conference is trying to connect to the meeting.

In any case, I have another motion to move. It concerns the whips' access to digital binders:

That the clerk of the subcommittee be authorized to grant access to the subcommittee's digital binder to the offices of the whips of each recognized party.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

Everyone heard the motion moved by Mr. Zuberi.

Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Chair: Anita, are you going to propose a motion? Go ahead, please.

Anita Vandenberg: Thank you.

[Translation]

The motion is as follows:

That the Chair, if necessary, use their prerogative to suspend meetings to maintain the order and decorum necessary to ensure the application of the House of Commons' policies on workplace health and safety.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Vandenberg.

Everyone heard the motion moved by Ms. Vandenberg.

Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I think that all the routine motions have been agreed to.

I'm now ready to give the floor to anyone who would like to speak.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I have a question for my colleagues. I don't know whether each of them intended to draw up a schedule of some kind. Do they want us to meet outside the subcommittee to discuss it, or do they want to do it now? I'm open to all options.

That said, obviously certain things are important to me. It has been a long time since the general election, and yet today is our first meeting. Moreover, we'll be holding only one meeting per week. If we want to deal with consensus issues promptly, we should do so fairly quickly.

We agreed on certain things beforehand, including the human rights defenders awards that we wanted to give certain people. We selected the recipients, but we still haven't had the opportunity to present the awards. Some of the recipients are in poor health, so I would like us to consider this issue a top priority for the committee. I have many ideas for other topics to study. However, I believe that presenting these awards should be a priority.

I also have a concern regarding the much-discussed subcommittee report that we adopted on September 17, 2024, regarding the situation of the Hazara people in Afghanistan. We never received a response from the government to our report, even though the motion requested one. Mr. Ehsassi, who was a member of the subcommittee at the time, requested a response from the government. I un-

derstand that the report didn't contain any recommendations. However, requests for a government response to a report, even if it doesn't contain recommendations, have been made in the past. This wouldn't delay the subcommittee's work, since it would take place within the backrooms of the government. Perhaps we could agree to ask the government to respond to this much-discussed 2024 report.

I'll say it again. I think that the presentation of the human rights defenders awards should be a top priority for the committee. Regarding other studies, I'm open to anything. As always, I think that we're an outstanding subcommittee that can find ways to achieve consensus and make progress on key issues.

• (1605)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

Mr. Zuberi, you have the floor.

Sameer Zuberi: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

I would suggest that we go into a closed session for this nature of discussion around committee business, planning our calendar and having this discussion around the calendar.

I move that we go into a closed session, that we go in camera.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: This is a non-debatable motion. We must proceed to the vote.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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