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Chair: Fayçal El-Khoury

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• (1545)

[Translation]

The Chair (Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.)): This meeting is called to order.

Welcome to meeting number 10 of the House of Commons Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the subcommittee on Monday, January 26, 2026, the subcommittee is meeting for its briefing on the human rights situation in Iran.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

[English]

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen, you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: English, French or floor. Those in the room can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I'll give a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

I'll also give a friendly reminder that this subcommittee focuses its activity on the international level, not the domestic. Questions and answers should reflect that.

I would like to welcome our first witness, Ms. Nazanin Boniadi. She is an activist for human rights and is with us by video conference.

Here I have to say a few words. Unfortunately, when we recognized people and honoured them, Madame Boniadi was not here. Now I am pleased to welcome you, and we are proud to announce to you that you were recognized by our committee as one of the greatest human rights activists. You are an activist who writes a new page in the history of human beings and human rights. Thanks for the job you are doing. May God be with you in every step you are taking in order to defend human rights.

Ms. Boniadi, welcome to our committee. I give you the floor for five minutes for your introduction. Please go ahead.

Nazanin Boniadi (Human Rights Activist, As an Individual): Mr. Chair, thank you very much for the kind recognition.

Members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Before I speak in my own voice, I want to begin with the words of someone who cannot be here today. This message was sent to me recently by a dissident in Iran:

It's basically martial law here. Anyone who makes even the smallest move gets arrested. They check phones. They strip people to see if there are pellet wounds, and if they find any, they detain them.

They threatened me too: "If you make the slightest move, we'll raid your home and take you somewhere no trace of you will remain."

This silence is suffocating me. My phone is tapped. They know where we live. In every alley there's a memorial—young people, beautiful like flowers, buried underground.

I survived only because the bullets didn't find me.

We 90 million people are prisoners and hostages. Without you, we are truly alone.

Honestly...I kind of wish I could become one of the immortalized martyrs too.

This is the psychological and physical reality of daily life for millions of Iranians. Human rights lawyers and experts are now warning that what is unfolding in Iran is not ordinary repression. It's a systemic assault on a civilian population that meets the legal threshold of crimes against humanity.

To understand why Iranians continue to risk everything, it helps to understand how the Islamic Republic governs. Political legitimacy has historically rested on a social contract. The state provides security and sustenance in exchange for the people's consent. As the writer Karim Sadjadpour recently described, what exists in Iran is not a social contract. It's a "predatory lease" imposed in 1979 and "long since expired."

Iranians still live inside the fever dream of an intolerant cleric, Ayatollah Khomeini, who believed that economics was for donkeys. Their private lives are regulated—whom they love, what they watch, what they wear. Women are treated as second-class citizens, beaten, imprisoned and killed over a piece of cloth.

Iranians endure rolling blackouts in a country rich in oil and gas. Their savings have been wiped out as inflation surges and the national currency has lost over 99% of its value since the revolution. Their rivers have dried up. Their lakes are vanishing. Their nation's beloved capital, Tehran, is sinking as groundwater is pumped away. The state's slogans are "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," never "Long live Iran." Patriotism, the revolution's founder declared, was paganism.

While citizens are told to endure austerity, a parallel state dominated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps operates as a tax-exempt mafia, controlling ports, telecoms and construction, while elites smuggle luxury goods through private terminals.

When citizens protest these conditions, they are branded enemies of God. They are executed without due process under charges like "corruption on earth". The Islamic Republic maintains the highest per capita execution rate in the world. This is not governance. It is extraction, coercion and terror.

Now, that system has entered its most violent phase. Credible reporting and testimonies from inside Iran indicate that since the nationwide uprising began in late December 2025, tens of thousands may have been killed. Human rights organizations stress that communication blackouts make all available figures a severe undercount. By scale, organization and intent, this violence meets the legal threshold for the crime of extermination under the Rome Statute.

Under the responsibility to protect, recognized in international law, this threshold triggers duty. Thousands of detained protesters now face the imminent threat of execution. Senior judicial authorities have warned that continuous protests may be prosecuted as waging war on God, a charge historically used to justify mass executions.

The Iranian people have demonstrated agency, cohesion and extraordinary courage. They have fulfilled their role, and the responsibility to protect now shifts outwards.

● (1550)

For Canada, six actions follow directly from these obligations.

First, protect civilians by degrading the regime's capacity to commit atrocities. Canada's leadership in designating the IRGC as a terrorist organization has already paved the way for others. That leadership must now be matched by coordinated multilateral enforcement targeting IRGC's leadership, assets and infrastructure.

Second, impose sustained economic measures, freeze regime assets globally and dismantle the clandestine tanker networks that finance this repression.

The Chair: Please, could you wrap it up? We're exceeding the time by almost half a minute.

Nazanin Boniadi: I'm so sorry. I can get to the other points later. I just want to close with a message, because I brought you the message of somebody from Iran.

Here's a final message from one of the bravest dissidents, Toomaj Salehi, who wanted me to share the following: "For years, we have taken to the streets to claim our rights for freedom and

equality, for democracy, to close a wound that has been the source of bleeding for decades. We look to one another and rely on one another, but how long can we stand bare-handed against bullets? Is our family of peace-seekers going to leave us to face this alone? If this movement fails, it's not because Iranians lacked courage. It's because the world once again failed to meet them at history's edge."

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. It's touching. Thank you, Ms. Boniadi.

Now we'll start with the first round of questions and answers. I would like to invite Mr. Majumdar to take the floor for seven minutes.

Go ahead, please.

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Thank you, Ms. Boniadi. Thank you for joining this committee and for being one of our human rights defender award recipients. We're very proud of your advocacy on behalf of the Iranian people.

I want to yield some of my time to allow you to finish your comments. If there were some remarks that you wish to get across, please feel free to share them now.

Nazanin Boniadi: I very much appreciate that. Thank you very much.

The third point I wanted to make in the calls to action is to guarantee the right to information. Internet blackouts, of course, are stopping Iranians from communicating with each other, but also with the outside world. This isn't just a technical issue; it's a protection issue.

The fourth point is to end impunity. Regime officials implicated in repression should be expelled from Canada, and legal proceedings under universal jurisdiction should be initiated.

The fifth point is to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

The sixth and final point is that Canada move from severed relationships to formal non-recognition of the Islamic Republic. A regime that systematically wages war on its population has forfeited legitimacy.

Thank you so much.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you for that. I really appreciate hearing this, because those are essential recommendations that we will now carry forward. The occupation of the Iranian people by this clerical military dictatorship has been suppressing this ancient light now penetrating through with the courage of their people.

My question for you is this. The Cyrus Cylinder sits in its cracked case in a display at the United Nations in New York, yet the United Nations itself has been one of the most unfortunately passive places when it comes time to fulfill the promise of Cyrus that every delegate has to pass through when they enter its halls. What is your message to António Guterres, the United Nations and his so-called human rights institutions as so many thousands of Iranians are massacred by such a brutal regime?

• (1555)

Nazanin Boniadi: That's a very poignant point that you made. You're right. Multilateralism has failed not only the Iranian people, I would argue, but the Venezuelan people and many others. When, as I did three years ago and other dissidents did recently before the UN Security Council, we make these points and carry the voices of the people of Iran to the UN, not the repressive regime that is already platformed at the UN, we are met, of course, with roadblocks, because China and countries like China and Russia will always veto any meaningful action to curtail and stop the influence of the regime and to empower the Iranian people.

As lawmakers across the world, the free world essentially, we have to come together and find a better model to support peace, freedom, democracy and human rights, and we are failing at this time.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you.

As you point out, the government in Beijing has been responsible for a \$60-billion multi-year pact on prosperity and on security with the Iranian regime, and the government in the Kremlin obviously has a massive drone and munitions supply chain along with the Iranian regime. They both have an interest to preserve the supreme leader and his apparatus.

When you think about how the IRGC, the Basij and others have been repressing the Iranian people, what is your view on how exactly we can best push back against such violent regional dictators and a regime that's now increasingly a colonial project of these two neighbours?

Nazanin Boniadi: The very brave dissident Toomaj Salehi said that they are bare-handed. They are unarmed, and they are being targeted by war bullets.

For peace advocates, as I am—I am a peace advocate—what that means is that you have to find a way to create peace in a situation where the state is waging war on its people. I'm not a politician, but I know that the responsibility to protect is something that exists under international law, and how that's going to be executed will require a very thoughtful multilateral approach. It's going to require targeted action against the IRGC and the machinery of repression that is targeting innocent people.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you.

We have a couple of minutes left.

Capitals across Europe, including London in the United Kingdom, are so slowly reacting to the realities of Iranians being massacred on their own streets. It has taken over a decade for them to even realize that the regime has been playing a shell game with

them in the name of reform for all for so long, all while pursuing regional terrorism and nuclear ambitions.

What would you say to shake the capitals out of their hypnotic commitment to their past ideology to act now, act today, and list the IRGC?

Nazanin Boniadi: In Canada, you have been leaders on this front, and we're very happy to see that the EU has recently joined you. The U.K. is now an outlier. We would ask them if they are going to catch up with the free world. At the moment, you have the U.S., Canada, Australia and Europe that have listed the IRGC. The U.K. really does need to catch up and wake up to the reality that the Iranian people are the future, not this regime.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you very much.

In the last 30 seconds or so, if there are any comments you have left, please feel free to share them now.

Nazanin Boniadi: Thank you to all of you for being leaders and for continuing to stand with the Iranian people.

I would just urge you to please take note of the six recommendations, and I'd be happy to work with you on that front. Thank you.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Apparently, I still have another minute.

Let me use it to ask you about the Iranian regime, which uses propaganda through proxy organizations in the western world. What evidence do we see of that?

• (1600)

Nazanin Boniadi: There are many videos online that show, actually, that they manipulate things. On Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons, for example, they will make sure that the primary videos, photos and sourcing point to Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader's propaganda and his website.

Obviously, regime officials are being platformed in western media. They were allowed to publish their op-eds while the Internet blackout was happening.

What I would urge western governments, media and institutions to do is ensure that those voices of the regime officials are not allowed to spew their propaganda, and instead allow the voices of the people of Iran to prevail.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you very much.

I'm looking now to the chair, as I'm convinced I've crossed the timeline by quite a bit.

Nazanin Boniadi: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I invite Madame Vandenberg to take the floor for three and a half minutes.

Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Thank you.

I'll be sharing my time with Mr. Ehsassi.

I just want to say, Ms. Boniadi, how pleased we are that you're here. You should know that the recognition that was given to you by this committee is done unanimously by all parties, so it is really the Parliament of Canada that is recognizing your work and through you, the work of all those incredibly brave people who are on the streets of Tehran and all over Iran right now fighting for their freedom.

Thank you, by the way, for those six recommendations that you provided us. That is very useful.

You mentioned in your remarks the importance of thoughtful multilateralism. Why is it important that what the international community does in support of the Iranian people is done through multilateral efforts?

As well, particularly if it comes to supporting, we hope, free and fair elections in Iran, why is it important that it be done through international support and not by one or another country or power?

Nazanin Boniadi: Thank you very much.

I want to take a second to dedicate this recognition to Toomaj Salehi and others. I carry Toomaj's voice today, and I want to make sure that he and others inside Iran who are languishing in jail—Fateme Sephiri, Narges Mohammadi and countless others.... I can't name them all. Thank you.

To answer your question, the regime in Iran has used this rhetoric. Their slogan, their essential founding principles, is “Death to America” and “Death to Israel”. They have killed people, executed people, by falsely accusing them of being aligned with the U.S. and Israel. That is all the more reason to make sure that this is not just something that is painted by the regime as supported by those two governments. It should be supported.... What should happen is that every freedom-loving country in the world and their governments should be supporting the efforts of a free, democratic Iran. That's where multilateralism comes in, to safeguard the idea that freedom is something that we all support, not just a couple of governments.

Anita Vandenberg: You also talk about the Internet blackout. The regime is going to great lengths to stop people from communicating the atrocities that are occurring. There are ways.... I know that in other venues you've talked about things like satellite-to-cell technology or things that could be done to help get the communications going again.

I wonder if you could elaborate on what it is that maybe Canada or other countries can do in that regard.

Nazanin Boniadi: Thank you so much.

Yes, I think efforts have been made to see if direct-to-cell satellite technology might work, and other ways. Essentially, what we need to do, if this type of thing happens again down the line, is to be ahead of it. It's not enough to be reacting. We have to be proactive.

I really urge tech companies to work with governments to find a way to be proactive about this and not let it happen again.

The Chair: Thank you, Anita.

Mr. Ehsassi, you have the floor for three and a half minutes.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Allow me to thank Ms. Boniadi.

You have been such an incredible resource to us all. You're essentially on speed dial for us. Thank you for all of your efforts.

I don't have much time, but I want to put it in context for all the members of this committee and anyone else who is following. As you said, this is a government that is waging war on its own people. The numbers that we're seeing are truly unprecedented. Do you know of any other instance in modern times where a government, a criminal government, has killed as many as we saw killed on the various streets across Iran in the last 40 to 50 years? I just want to sensitize everyone to how horrid this actually is.

Can you think of any precedents?

• (1605)

Nazanin Boniadi: I'm sorry; I got cut off.

I'm sorry, Mr. Ehsassi, but I lost your voice for a second.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: I was just wondering if in the modern era, in the last 40 to 50 years, you can think of any other country that has experienced something on the same scale as the criminal activity of the Iranian regime.

Nazanin Boniadi: No, I can't imagine. Of course, in Tiananmen Square, we saw approximately 10,000 slaughtered, and that was horrific. The numbers have surpassed that, by every indication that we're getting. At least 6,000 have been confirmed and over 17,000 are under review. Some investigative reporters and medical doctors inside Iran are saying it's 33,000.

No, I would put this among the greatest, if not the greatest protest massacre since World War II.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you.

On looking at your recommendations, I see they are all incredibly concrete. They're very effective. Which one do you think we will have the best chance of making sure that not only Canada, but also the U.S. and our allies would all adhere to? I truly believe it's important that countries act together, and we should make sure that we are not acting in isolation.

Which one do you think we should be pushing the most?

Nazanin Boniadi: It's hard to say, because they all are on equal footing. I would say that, since you're a leader on isolating and holding the IRGC to account, it would be something I would encourage you to talk to your British counterparts about, and ensure that they do.

Another thing that I think not enough people are talking about is non-recognition. You also led the way—I believe it was in 2012—when you closed the Iranian embassy in Canada. The next logical step is non-recognition, meaning that the Islamic Republic does not legitimately represent the Iranian people. Now, if we could get global consensus on that, it would be fantastic.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ehsassi.

Now I invite Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe to take the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being with us, Ms. Boniadi. I am extremely pleased about that.

I'm going to continue along the same lines as my colleague Mr. Ehsassi, but more specifically with regard to Iran.

Obviously, you know your history well. You have directly or indirectly witnessed egregious abuses by the mullah regime.

How does the current repression differ from other repressions that have taken place in Iran, such as the atrocities and mass executions committed in 1988?

[*English*]

Nazanin Boniadi: Thank you for the question.

Essentially, what happened in 1988 was the targeting of prisoners, so these were people who had already been captured. These were not protesters. What we're seeing today is people protesting in the streets. When I say "prisoners", those were also dissidents, so it's not fair that they were imprisoned. They were imprisoned for political reasons. That was also abhorrent.

Today, we've seen people taking to the streets, voicing discontent about this regime and being met with war bullets. The difference, of course, is that what we're seeing today is unprecedented. The number one call that galvanizes and unites people on the streets is "Death to Khamenei"—they don't want this regime anymore—and "Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!" That is, really, what's echoing. Everyone is united: There isn't a faction that is not united around these slogans. That's, really, the difference today. Of course, it leaves the regime with no way of dealing with it but their usual repressive tactic, which is to crack down on protesters. What is unprecedented, of course, is the number of protesters who have been killed.

What we're not really looking at are the tens of thousands—and some are saying hundreds of thousands—who have been imprisoned. I'm hearing, from inside Iran, that prisons are so crowded now that people are cramped in spaces, not eating well, not being taken care of and facing imminent execution. That's another wave that can possibly happen in the very near future.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Many international experts believe that the scale, organization and intent of these repressions meet the threshold for crimes against humanity. You shared that with us in your presentation.

For the benefit of the committee, can you give us concrete examples that we can collect and then put out into the public space?

[*English*]

Nazanin Boniadi: Of course. Human rights experts and lawyers have already pointed to the fact that this is classified, under the

Rome Statute, as an extermination. When this number of people are targeted by the state, that's what it is. It's an extermination. Even if it's the just over 6,000 names of people who have been confirmed killed, that is already a crime against humanity.

However, we're looking at far more than that, and far greater and more serious crimes against humanity than that. With all the evidence—the video evidence that we're seeing and the senior officials in the health ministry who have told us that the numbers are likely to be quite high, definitely in the tens of thousands—there is no other way to address this than as crimes against humanity. That requires every government to come together to find a way forward to stop this from escalating even more.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: You don't have to answer, but to what extent do foreign powers that work hand in hand with the mullah regime currently represent an obstacle to the actions of the various countries that support the Iranian people?

Of course, I'm thinking of China, among other countries, which does a lot of trade with Iran in terms of energy.

How difficult is it to see those powers supporting the mullah regime?

To what extent should those powers also be denounced by the various countries that actually support the Iranian people who are rising up?

[*English*]

Nazanin Boniadi: I think there's a very clear alignment with certain authoritarian regimes that protect each other economically and policy-wise. What we fail to do in the free world is to be equally united against that despotism. If we are not able to align ourselves in a way that basically increases the cost of repression, increases the cost of collaboration among those who repress, then we are failing, and what are we protecting? We're not protecting democracy. We're not protecting freedom or peace.

People make the mistake of thinking that... When you see a crime happening in front of you, do you not go to the perpetrator of that crime and arrest them? Somebody inside Iran said to me, "When I'm witnessing a crime, I call the police. Who are we supposed to call when our state is committing the crime?"

Surely we have to have a multilateral approach in international law that allows for a state to be arrested, so to speak, and we're not doing that. That's for you. It's for people far smarter and more experienced than I am to figure out how that should be done, but the mechanisms need to be in place, and we need to realize them with practical measures.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: What message is being sent to the Iranian people when countries such as Canada acknowledge the seriousness of the crimes, but fail to take concrete diplomatic action?

Those of us who are seated around the table support the Iranian people, and have done so for a long time. Nonetheless, there seems to be some hesitancy on the part of various countries, including Canada. These countries condemn the current situation, but are not taking concrete action. Instead, what we have seen recently, as in the United Kingdom, is that our Prime Minister travelled to China to conclude trade agreements, despite the fact that China supports the mullah regime.

How can that be interpreted?

[English]

The Chair: Could you provide a quick answer, please? Time is over.

Nazanin Boniadi: The quick answer is that we understand that every country has its own best interests at heart, and that is understandable. I think what needs to happen is to understand that as long as this regime stands, it is not in Canada's interest and it is not in the world's interest. Finding a way to curtail the repression and hold this regime to account would essentially translate not only to a more peaceful region domestically but to a more stable world.

It is in your interest and it is in everybody's interest to side with the Iranian people.

The Chair: Thank you.

On behalf of myself and all the members of this subcommittee, we would like to thank you for your time here and the good answers in illustrating this. Once again, congratulations for the recognition you received unanimously from the subcommittee. We highly respect the good job you are doing, your good efforts, and we wish you the best.

Thank you.

Nazanin Boniadi: I'm deeply grateful. Thank you.

The Chair: The meeting is suspended.

• (1615) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1625)

The Chair: Welcome back, as we continue our meeting with our second panel.

[Translation]

I would now like to welcome the witnesses.

[English]

We have Farough Abeyat, student, to represent most of the minority in Iran.

We have Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay, human rights and democracy advocate. Welcome.

We have Atena Daemi, human rights defender, by video conference. Welcome.

From the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, we have Kaveh Shahrooz, lawyer and senior fellow.

From the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, we have our friend Brandon Silver, director of policy and projects, and Kimberly Lenz, program and policy officer. Welcome.

We would like to start by giving everyone four minutes for an introduction. We'll start with Mr. Abeyat.

You have four minutes. Please go ahead.

Farough Abeyat (Student, As an Individual): Chair, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Ahwazi Democratic Popular Front, we would like to draw your attention to the grave and deteriorating situation facing non-Persian peoples within the geography of what is known as Iran, particularly following the events that took place from December 2025 to January 2026.

These events marked a dangerous escalation in the level of repression and violence carried out by the Iranian authorities. In the aftermath, tens of thousands of civilians were killed in cold blood. These crimes were not isolated incidents, but rather part of a systematic policy aimed at silencing dissent.

As a result, fear and terror have spread widely among non-Persian communities. Citizens now live under constant threat, fear of arrest, fear of enforced disappearance and fear of collective punishment. Homes are raided, families are torn apart and entire communities are intimidated simply because of their national, cultural or linguistic identity.

The Ahwazi Arab people have been among the most severely targeted. Arbitrary and mass arrests have intensified, affecting activists, intellectuals, workers and ordinary civilians alike. Detention without charge, forced confessions and unfair trials have become routine methods used to suppress any form of expression or resistance.

However, repression is not limited to Ahwazi alone. Similar policies are systematically enforced against other non-Persian peoples, including the Kurds, Turkmens, Azerbaijanis and the Baloch. These communities face widespread discrimination, militarization of their regions, economic marginalization and severe restrictions on their cultural and political rights. Their shared suffering reflects a broader pattern of state-sponsored oppression based on identity.

Ahwaz has been under Iranian occupation since 1925. Since that time, the region has been subjected to policies of marginalization, demographic manipulation and cultural erasure. Despite being one of the richest regions in natural resources, its indigenous population remains among the most impoverished. Ahwaz contains vast reserves of oil and gas and serves as a major centre for petrochemical industries. It also possesses fertile agricultural lands, steel and iron industries and numerous mineral resources. These resources contribute significantly to the Iranian economy, yet the people of Ahwaz are denied their fair share. Instead, they suffer from unemployment, environmental destruction, water shortages, land confiscation and suspension of their language and culture. Political participation and basic freedoms are systematically denied.

What we are witnessing today is not merely an internal matter; it constitutes ongoing and serious human rights violations against entire nations living under state domination. The repression of Ahwazi Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Azerbaijanis, the Baloch and other non-Persian people exposed a deeply rooted systematic discrimination within the political structure of the state.

The Ahwazi Democratic Popular Front calls on the international community to break its silence, to listen to the voices of the oppressed, to conduct independent investigations and to hold those responsible for these crimes accountable. We demand an immediate end to mass arrests, extrajudicial killings and collective punishment. We call for the release of all political prisoners and for the recognition of the legitimate rights of non-Persian peoples, including their right to dignity, justice, equality and self-determination.

The oppressed peoples of Iran are not asking for charity; they are demanding their fundamental human rights—the right to live freely on their land, to benefit from the resources and to preserve their identity without fear.

History has shown that oppression may silence voices temporarily, but it can never break the will of nations. The struggle for freedom, justice and equality will continue until these rights are fully realized.

Thank you.

● (1630)

The Chair: Thank you. That was good timing.

Now I would like to invite Madame Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay.

You have the floor for four minutes. You're welcome to go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay (Human Rights and Democracy Advocate, As an Individual): During my 23 years as a defender of human rights and democracy, I have witnessed many atrocities committed by this regime, but I have never seen anything comparable to what is happening today in Iran.

[*English*]

I have never seen anything like what is happening in Iran today: parents sifting through warehouses filled with piles of body bags, desperately trying to find their loved ones. A modern-day massacre has taken place, and the killing continues. Suppression forces patrol the streets, arresting those with injuries or finishing them off with a bullet to the head, dumping them in mass graves or injecting prisoners with lethal substances.

After the last round of protests, during “Woman, Life, Freedom”, the UN fact-finding mission on Iran concluded that the regime had committed crimes against humanity, yet the scale of violence we are witnessing now is unprecedented, including the use of military-grade weapons against peaceful protesters.

As former UN prosecutor Payam Akhavan stated just a few days ago at the UN Human Rights Council, at least 33,000 Iranians have been killed. He noted that during the Srebrenica genocide, 8,000

Bosnians were killed and the world responded. In Iran, four times that number were massacred in half the time.

Ms. Boniadi has already perfectly detailed some of this, so with your permission I will move directly to recommendations, because words of condemnation will not save lives.

I'm proud that Canada, over the years, has demonstrated leadership on this issue, first by closing its embassy and second by listing the IRGC on the terrorist list. We can continue to build on that leadership.

Former Canadian minister of justice Lloyd Axworthy helped develop the principle of the responsibility to protect, or R2P. Today, we have the opportunity to put it into action. R2P is often misunderstood as requiring military intervention. In reality, it includes a broad set of tools that Canada is uniquely positioned to lead.

First, Canada should convene a coalition of G7 countries to coordinate action, including urging those that have not yet done so, such as the U.K., to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization and to recall ambassadors or close embassies of the regime. This coalition could coordinate targeted sanctions that truly cripple the regime. For example, sanction Arvancloud for its complicity in Iran's deliberate Internet blackout, as the U.S. and the U.K. have already done, and seize regime assets and repurpose them to help victims or democracy efforts.

Second, Canada should help Iranians by providing secure Internet access, including satellite and VPN services such as Starlink and tools provided by Psiphon. Psiphon is a Canadian-based company started at the University of Toronto that in a single day provides secure VPN communication to almost 10 million Iranians. Even during blackouts, essential videos and footage were shared thanks to its new innovation called Conduit. The U.S. has been funding this organization for many years, and to meet increased demand, I believe Canada could do its part.

Canada could also provide funding to independent, non-partisan media broadcasting into Iran via satellite to counter regime propaganda and support democratic institution building.

● (1635)

The Chair: If you could, please wrap it up.

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Next, Canada could commit humanitarian aid and medical supplies in advance, to be ready for deployment when the regime falls. This is desperately needed, as Iranian doctors are being targeted. Some have even received death sentences simply for treating the injured.

Canada should activate universal jurisdiction and other legal mechanisms to hold perpetrators of crimes against humanity accountable, with the eventual goal of proceedings before the International Criminal Court. In the meantime, the RCMP could open structural investigations into the situation in Iran instead of just deporting these regime officials.

Lastly, Canada could support a crisis management centre, a hub for Iranian technocratic experts to gather and prepare for post-regime transition.

Words of condemnation will not save lives. In concert with our allies, if the political will is there, you have the power to help end this mass killing. You have the power to ensure a nuclear-free Iran. A free, democratic Iran would mean that not only Iranians would be safe but also Canadians like Irwin Cotler and victims of transnational repression, who require 24-hour police protection, and the world at large would also be safer.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now I would like to invite Madame Atena Daemi to take the floor for four minutes, please.

The floor is yours.

Atena Daemi (Human Rights Defender, As an Individual): *[Witness spoke in Farsi, interpreted as follows:]*

Thank you very much for inviting me. I would like to speak directly about the current human rights situation in Iran.

These days, many people inside Iran repeat a sentence that clearly shows the depth of the tragedy: “I am ashamed to be alive; I wish I had been killed too.” It reflects a deep wound and a heavy psychological burden on the collective memories of Iranian society.

Following economic collapse, the sharp fall of the national currency and severe pressure on daily life, widespread public anger emerged across the country. Nationwide protests and strikes spread quickly but, from the very first days, they were met with violent repression. Security and military forces acting on direct orders from Ali Khamenei fired live ammunition at civilians. At the same time, the Internet and even phone communications were completely shut down to prevent people from sharing information or asking for help.

During this crackdown, security forces attacked hospitals. They either killed injured protesters with final shots or abducted them from medical centres. The fate of many of these people is still unknown. Among many of my own friends and acquaintances alone, at least 11 people were killed, including Aida Aghili, a woman who was shot twice in the head with live ammunition.

According to data published by a well-known human rights organization, HRANA, the number of confirmed deaths is 6,479, including 118 children under the age of 18. I must stress that this figure includes only cases that could be fully verified despite widespread Internet shutdowns. In addition, more than 17,000 deaths are still under investigation, and at least 11,020 people have been reported injured. Existing estimates indicate that between 30,000 and 50,000 people have been killed. These numbers are not just statistics. Each number represents a human life and the destruction of a family.

After the street protests decreased, repression entered a new phase: violent arrests, summons and fabricated charges, the presence of security forces in schools, pressure on students and their families, and tighter control over hospitals and medical centres. At

the same time, security forces carried out house-to-house raids to confiscate satellite dishes and Starlink equipment.

The Islamic Republic has demanded and collected large sums of money from families to return the bodies of those killed, and from people simply for owning satellite or Starlink equipment, while the monthly minimum wage of a worker in Iran is extremely low.

The situation of detainees is also extremely alarming. I speak from personal experience, having spent seven years in prisons of the Islamic Republic, and I know very well what detainees are facing today: systematic torture, beatings, solitary confinement, denial of contact with families, and fast-track trials without access to a lawyer, often leading to death sentences based on fabricated charges. So far, at least 281 forced confessions have been broadcast on state-affiliated media. Many reports also describe denial of medical care, forced injections or the administration of unknown drugs, and inhuman detention conditions caused by severe overcrowding and lack of water, food and basic necessities. More than 20,000 protesters—lawyers, nurses, doctors, university students and school students—have been arrested so far.

For years, Iranians have peacefully demanded an end to the Islamic Republic, yet again there has been repression. What has unfolded in recent days amounts to an unprecedented—

• (1640)

The Chair: Can you wrap it up, please? We have exceeded the time.

Atena Daemi: Okay, no problem.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now I would like to invite Mr. Kaveh Shahrooz to take the floor for four minutes.

The floor is yours.

Kaveh Shahrooz (Lawyer and Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, and thank you to the subcommittee for inviting me.

Over the years, I have appeared many times before this subcommittee to speak about human rights abuses in Iran. Each time, I warned that the situation was awful. Today, I'm here to say that the situation is catastrophic. Iranians face a human rights crisis with few parallels in contemporary history. It's an emergency that should compel Canada and the entire democratic world to act.

Governments that truly represent their people do not need to slaughter their citizens and hide what they're doing from the world by shutting off the Internet. The more a regime's legitimacy drops, the more it's forced to use violence and fear to make up for that deficit. Iran's regime is lashing out today because it has lost all legitimacy. All it has left is naked violence and state terror.

For years, the Islamic regime claimed that it could protect Iran from foreign threats. That illusion is gone, thanks to the humiliation it suffered during the 12-day war with Israel. In that war, Israel showed the world that Iran's regime cannot control its skies, protect its top military officials or even provide its citizens with bomb shelters.

For years, the Islamic regime tried to project strength through its proxies. These proxies, like Hezbollah and Hamas, have now collapsed or have been severely degraded. Gone also is Bashar al-Assad, who killed hundreds of thousands of his own citizens at the Iranian regime's say-so.

Domestically, too, the regime is desperate and out of options. In 1979, when this regime took power, one U.S. dollar bought 70 rials. Thanks to sanctions imposed because of the regime's criminally foolish efforts to obtain a nuclear weapon, thanks to its utter incompetence and mismanagement, thanks to the nation's wealth being squandered in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza, and thanks to truly staggering levels of corruption among the upper ranks of the regime, today that same U.S. dollar buys over a million rials. This is economic destruction. Iran's people are increasingly, and in large numbers, falling into poverty.

It doesn't end there. Because of criminal levels of mismanagement and corruption by what has been called a "water mafia", Iran is literally running out of water. The so-called president of the country has talked about moving the capital because there is not enough water for the people of Tehran.

It's not diplomatic to use such language, but for all the reasons I just stated, and many more, Iran's regime today is like an aggressive, rabid animal that is cornered. Because it is cornered, it's lashing out in ways that are hard for those of us who live safely in Canada to even fathom. When Iran erupted in late December and early January with anti-regime protests, this rabid, illegitimate and cornered regime did the only thing regimes like this do to maintain power: It opened fire, and it did not stop until the country was overrun with blood.

By the very conservative estimates of the Human Rights Activists News Agency, or HRANA, 6,842 people were killed by the regime over the span of just a few days, with 146 of them under the age of 18. HRANA also reports over 11,000 injured. As I said, these are very conservative estimates. Now that the Internet is beginning to return to Iran, we're hearing about casualty rates in the tens of thousands.

For the crime of wanting an end to dictatorship, for the crime of wanting to end gender and religious apartheid, and for the crime of wanting to be able to feed their kids and have drinking water, thousands upon thousands of Iranians were killed and dumped in morgues, put in what has become the dark, enduring symbol of the Iranian regime's crimes against humanity: the black body bag.

In the face of this crisis, I ask—nay, implore—Canada's government not to be silent. I implore you to loudly say that this regime has committed mass human rights violations and that its leaders must face international criminal justice. Iran is not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, but there are ways, through the UN Security Council, that its leaders can still be

indicted by the ICC. Canada should push the global community for such an outcome.

I implore you to work to provide funding for Starlink terminals for Iranians, because the Islamic regime will continue to shut off the Internet to commit atrocities. I implore you to use legislation we already have to identify and deport regime officials who have come to Canada and brought their families here, and to seize the assets of those who have brought money here. This is blood money that's pumping through our housing markets and banks.

● (1645)

The Chair: Could you wrap it up, please? You have already exceeded the time by one minute.

Kaveh Shahrooz: I will, for sure.

I implore you to allow—after proper vetting, of course—more refugees in from Iran. Each time there are mass protests in Iran, brave men and women have to escape to nearby countries. Let Canada be a safe haven to them and not to the rich regime officials and their children.

Most importantly, I implore you to say loudly and publicly, as a matter of formal Canadian policy, that the Islamic regime in Iran is illegitimate and needs to go. Adopting a policy like that is not common in international relations, but we did it with another repugnant regime of the modern era—that of apartheid South Africa. There, we clearly recognized evil and stood up to it. Iran's regime, a regime that puts thousands in black body bags solely for their wanting their rights, is no less evil. I implore you to stand up to it.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would like to invite Mr. Brandon Silver to take the floor for four minutes.

[*Translation*]

Brandon Silver (Director of Policy and Projects, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights): Honourable members, thank you for the opportunity to join you today.

[*English*]

As legal counsel to victims of atrocities and political prisoners, we have seen the horrifying human stories that underpin the staggering statistics of abuse in Iran.

Iran has the highest rate of child executions in the world, the highest per capita rate of executions more generally, the highest rate of state hostage takings and the highest per capita rate of imprisonment of journalists.

This has real and tangible costs for Canadians. It meant the murder of Montreal photojournalist Zahra Kazemi; the hostage takings of Professor Maryam Mombeini and Saeed Malekpour; the killing of the Canadian passengers of flight PS752; the murders of eight Canadians on October 7, 2023, and the atrocities that are ongoing as we speak, wherein the authorities are confirmed to have killed Canadians and likely will continue doing so.

None of these Canadians received justice, and their killers and kidnappers enjoy impunity. They are now committing these crimes again as we meet here today.

Canada has the authority to investigate and prosecute these crimes. The criteria established by the RCMP for opening a structural investigation have clearly been met. These crimes against humanity that are occurring have a strong nexus to Canada: There are Canadian victims; many in the Iranian community here in Canada can provide evidence to the RCMP; and perpetrators are likely to be caught in Canada.

Announcing the opening of an investigation would send a message of solidarity to victims and of accountability to violators and assert the value of Canadian citizenship. It would protect our sovereignty, establishing consequences for murdering Canadians and demonstrating that their murderers are not welcome in Canada. The gathering of evidence through a structural investigation would assist with prospective prosecutions in Canada or with mechanisms abroad. It would also assist the Canada Border Services Agency to identify and deny entry to perpetrators, many of whom are likely to come to Canada as conditions in Iran continue to deteriorate.

Again, two separate United Nations independent expert bodies have determined that the actions of these perpetrators may constitute crimes against humanity. They should be investigated and prosecuted as such.

Canada has an opportunity and a duty to lead on behalf of the victimized Canadians left without justice, on behalf of the brave Iranians on the front lines of the fight for our common humanity, and on behalf of our country's foundational principles of justice and the rule of law, which are currently under global assault.

Thank you.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you.

I'd like to invite Ms. Kimberly Lenz to take the floor for four minutes, please.

Kimberly Lenz (Program and Policy Officer, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights): Thank you.

My remarks today address the urgent need for a decisive Canadian response to the Islamic Republic's widespread crackdown on peaceful protesters and its external aggression abroad.

The sheer scale of the regime's systematic brutality is unprecedented. By conservative estimates, as we have heard, at least 33,000 Iranians have been massacred, with credible assessments ranging far higher. Experts describe it as the worst mass killing in Iran's modern history, and others conclude it meets the legal threshold for crimes against humanity. The killings continue, and the

regime's judiciary has announced the imminent execution of thousands of detainees.

Alongside this, Canada and liberal democracies face escalating threats from the Islamic Republic and its proxies. CSIS, the G7 and a broad coalition of democracies have warned of growing transnational repression and lethal threats.

This is a historic and pivotal moment. Canadian leadership would build on mounting political momentum to deny the regime the freedom to operate with impunity.

We urge the Canadian government to target the architect of these threats, the IRGC, by dismantling its networks through two key measures.

First, Canada should promote and support proscription of the IRGC as a terrorist entity with like-minded partners, particularly the U.K., where parliamentarians are pressing for the rapid adoption of enabling legislation and the group's designation.

Second, it should deepen coordination with allies, including the European Union, which unanimously agreed on its designation last week. Enhanced intelligence-sharing, law enforcement and judicial collaboration, as well as sanctions alignment, would strengthen national and global security.

Iranians continue to rise up against the regime's tyranny and risk their lives in pursuit of a secular, democratic Iran, grounded in human rights. Canada must respond with urgency and resolve.

Thank you for the opportunity.

The Chair: Now, I would like to start with the first round of questions and answers.

I would like to invite Mr. Majumdar to take the floor for seven minutes.

The floor is yours.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all of our witnesses for bearing testimony to a people who are under such brutal subjugation by a brutal regime.

Ms. Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay, I would like to ask you my first question.

You cautioned about regime propaganda that is being deployed in its own self-preservation. You mentioned in your testimony that they might use deceased victims—victims they murdered and massacred—and pre-position them, in light of a potential attack on their own regime brutality and infrastructure. Could I ask you to take a couple of minutes to expand upon what Canadians and the world need to prepare to see, in how the regime intends to propagandize the murdered in its own self-defence?

• (1655)

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Absolutely. I was speaking earlier about families having to root through body bags. What we've noticed is that there are fewer women and children. Iranians started to ask the question, where are the women and children? It wasn't just because of the disproportionate number of men who were out on the streets, because what differentiates this round of protests from the last one is that it involved a cross-section of society, from all ages, classes, ethnicities, etc. It was a full national revolution, and when they were searching, they weren't finding the women and children. What was discovered was that they are preserving these bodies in refrigeration trucks and warehouses so that in the event of a foreign intervention they can use these bodies as evidence of the deaths committed by foreign countries, like the United States or Israel.

They will use every means and opportunity to point the blame at someone else or another country other than themselves.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: It's brutal testimony to offer, and I'm grateful for your candour. I know it's not easy to talk about human beings suffering this type of abuse by, one, being murdered, and two, being victimized as a prop to protect the regime.

I've had experience with confronting this regime as early as 2006 in Iraq and in Afghanistan, where they have pursued some of the most vile tactics we've ever seen in the history of warfare. The imagination and ambition they bring are based upon a values set that I think many in the western world don't necessarily appreciate. It is not a culture of life; it is a celebration of death, a nihilistic ambition to eradicate people and a sectarian ambition to control the world, if not the region, to start.

Mr. Shahrooz, I'm going to turn to you now.

Your powerful testimony implored Canadian leaders to do more than talk, to do more than issue statements. From January until now, the Government of Canada has been abysmally silent. I want to give you a minute to expand upon your thinking about what, in a real world, you would have preferred to see your government do. It's a government that is supposed to represent the families of murdered victims of flight PS752, murdered prisoners, tortured prisoners, prisoners who are still held in Evin prison. Tell me, tell us, share with Canada your perspective, please, sir.

Kaveh Shahrooz: Thank you, Mr. Majumdar.

Yes, what we've heard from our government has been, in my view, woefully inadequate. We've heard statements of condemnation, which are welcomed, but there really needs to be much more.

Canada has a unique role to play. Canada is home to a very large Iranian Canadian population, as we can see from the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, on the streets in the last few weeks. Canada should take a leadership role in the world. A lot of what I mentioned in my testimony is what Canada should be doing.

First and foremost, Canada, regrettably, has become a safe haven for regime affiliates. I think that's where we should begin. We now have the tools, with the IRGC terror listing and with certain changes to our immigration policies, to go after folks who have ties to the regime, to seize their assets, to kick them out of the country and to ensure that those with ties to the regime don't come here.

Regrettably, there has been too little enforcement of that. Since those laws came into effect, as far as I know, very little has been done to combat the many regime affiliates in this country. Regrettably, our IRGC listing has made life very difficult for conscripts who didn't want to serve in the IRGC. Their lives have been made difficult, but those with more substantial ties to this terrible, terrible institution have not been prosecuted, so that's a place to start.

Also, Canada should take a leadership role globally. We took this step many years ago when we closed our embassy and we kicked out the Iranian ambassador. That's something the rest of the democratic world needs to do, and Canada should take a leadership role in that. We have been too silent on that. I think our general policy ought to be, as I mentioned in my testimony, that this regime is illegitimate and needs to be treated as a pariah state in every sense. Canada should play an important role in that.

• (1700)

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you for your testimony.

I'll give my remaining minute to MP Kronis.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): I'm going to ask a quick follow-up on your comments.

You mentioned regime affiliates. I'm wondering if you can comment on the ways the IRGC is using other issues and those affiliates to support its campaign in Canada.

Kaveh Shahrooz: The IRGC, aside from being a brutal military force, is also a very powerful and corrupt economic force in Iran. It has affiliations with all sorts of bad actors around the globe, terrorist organizations, criminal gangs and so on. Through that economic power, it has managed to engage in all sorts of nefarious activities in the region and globally.

In Canada, what it has done is... There are people with ties to that organization who have found their way here, who have stashed their money in our banks. They've invested it in property and businesses and so on. That's really what we ought to be combatting. We now have the tools to do it. We just need the political will to actually take action.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Kronis.

I would like to invite Mr. Ehsassi to take the floor for seven minutes, please.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you also to all the witnesses. You have been focused on human rights violations in Iran or more broadly for many, many years, so we all owe you a great debt of gratitude. You're here not just because of the events that have taken place in the course of the past month, but for the hard work you've been doing year in, year out.

If I may, I'll start with Ms. Afshin-Jam MacKay. You pointed out, rightly, how important technology is and how we should harness all the tools at our disposal to make sure that the horrific practice of this regime to cloak everything in darkness never happens again.

You spoke about Arvancloud—I had never heard about this specific organization—and the fact that the U.K. and the U.S. have already listed it. It's a very good suggestion that we start there, but would you mind sharing with us what the significance of this organization is?

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Ehsassi.

Arvancloud played a huge role in the regime's intranet project. They controlled and censored versions of the Internet inside Iran. They were directly involved and implicated in these Internet blackouts, when thousands of people were murdered—not just this time, in these protests, but during “Bloody November”, when 1,500 people were killed in a matter of days.

I don't know too much about the tech that goes behind it, but I would encourage your subcommittee to one day invite Mr. Mehdi Yahyanejad, who leads a technology guild, so to speak, with a lot of different Iranian diaspora groups that are involved in the tech sector. He's an expert in this, and he would be very well suited to answer some of these questions.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: That's a great suggestion, and I will follow up on your recommendation. I will reach out to Mr. Yahyanejad. I'm sure he has very compelling evidence as to why the U.K. and U.S. did this, and I'm sure—

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: By the way, he is also responsible for delivering thousands of Starlinks inside Iran.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Absolutely. Thank you for that. I will undertake to reach out.

With respect to the other instrument you mentioned, Psiphon, as you know, it was developed at the University of Toronto by the Citizen Lab. It is important that we do everything possible to utilize their tools.

Do you know of any other government that has used their technology and has put in big orders?

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Yes.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: I ask because the more examples we have, the easier it is for us to try to push our government officials to do likewise. If you know of any examples where other governments have used or obtained their technology, we'd be grateful for them.

• (1705)

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: The United States has been funding this particular organization for many years, because they are the largest company that serves VPNs to Iranians. They've had great success.

As I said, they have a new technology called Conduit. Again, I'm not a tech expert, but what I understand is that it allows regular citizens to donate their Internet bandwidth to those inside Iran, so that Iranians are able to utilize it and send communications, photos and videos in a situation like a blackout. It is a real lifesaver. This is not just about communicating back home to see how mom is; it is actually saving lives.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you for that, and for your guidance.

Mr. Shahrooz, regarding Starlink, I remember this has been a recurring issue. We have all mentioned the need to do this for the past three years. I assume the price of Starlink has actually plummeted in terms of how expensive it is to obtain its units. As it was mentioned previously, some units have made their way into Iran.

Do you know of any government that has gone out there and paid for Starlink to be used in various countries? Again, I use it not because I want to say.... I actually agree with everything you guys have said. I just want to have more compelling examples for us all to use.

Kaveh Shahrooz: That's an excellent question.

To my knowledge, the folks my colleague, Ms. Afshin-Jam MacKay, mentioned who worked on sending Starlink to Iran—Mr. Yahyanejad and other Iranian activists—have relied on funding, either direct or indirect, from the United States government. Obviously, the United States has not funded it directly or sent Starlink directly, but they funded civil society groups that are engaged in this. Whether the EU has engaged in this, I'm not quite sure, but I know for certain that the U.S. has. I think that's an important model for us in Canada to follow.

Again, as my colleague mentioned, this is a matter of life and death. The reason they shut down the Internet is twofold. First, it was to prevent people from being able to organize and coordinate. Second, it was so their crimes would not be reported in real time. Being able to combat that really makes the difference between life and death for thousands of people.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Absolutely. Thank you for that.

Now I'll go to Mr. Silver, whom we've had the pleasure of having here on many occasions as well, given his expertise.

You talked about the significance of prosecutions. You also reminded us that this Iranian regime has acted with impunity for many years and how important it is to hold them to account.

What are some of the impediments, insofar as the machinery of government is concerned, to prosecutions? Perhaps if you opened up that particular issue again, we could do a better job on our end of trying to encourage the machinery of government here in Canada to come to life.

Brandon Silver: Engaging, perhaps directly, with—

The Chair: If it's possible, give a quick answer, please. The time is almost up.

Brandon Silver: I would encourage the committee to consider posing these questions to the government and to those responsible for carrying out these prospective investigations and prosecutions.

Again, all a structural investigation calls for is the opening of the relevant resources to look into these crimes against humanity. It would mean interviewing Iranian Canadians about crimes they may have witnessed and looking into the matter, vis-à-vis passive jurisdiction, of Canadians who were killed or harmed in Iran, which Minister Anand has publicly acknowledged there were.

We have done so consistently and concertedly vis-à-vis Ukraine, and Daesh crimes against Yazidis, so clearly the machinery of government and the resources are there when it comes to other jurisdictions and crises. Certainly crimes against Canadians in Iran would merit that as well.

Hon. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

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

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

Ms. Daemi, you are obviously in contact with a lot of people in Iran and abroad.

As some witnesses mentioned earlier, does the fact that officials can live abroad, including in democratic countries such as Canada, have an impact on the feeling of impunity or even safety for some Iranians in the diaspora, regardless of where they are in the world?

• (1710)

[*English*]

Atena Daemi: [*Witness spoke in Farsi, interpreted as follows:*]

Yes, I can say for sure that the diaspora living outside.... In whatever way you can support Iranians in Iran, especially political prisoners and those who are on death row....

I, myself, was in prison. The people who were campaigning to support me were very effective. It was effective for the way they were treating me. It created a kind of security for me. It's not that they wouldn't do anything, but they were cautious in how they behaved.

The support from outside of Iran is loud voices for the people of Iran and the prisoners. It will cause the Iranian government to treat Iranians with caution. I believe that if the global world would make a wall against it, perhaps we would not be observing such atrocity against human rights. I think it would be effective.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you.

Mr. Silver, it's partly because of me that you are often invited to the committee, because I really appreciate the light you shed on the issues we study.

International experts have concluded that due to its scale, organization and intentional nature, repression in Iran rises to the legal threshold of crimes against humanity.

Can you explain to the committee what that threshold actually means in international law?

Brandon Silver: I thank the member for that question. It's relevant and important. I also thank the subcommittee for its commitment.

The United Nations has said, in two respects and at two separate meetings....

[*English*]

For the sake of clarity, I'll revert to English. Please excuse me.

One, the United Nations working group on arbitrary detention, which is a group of independent experts who analyze the deprivation and detention of individuals, has determined, in specific Canadian cases, that Iran's policy and practice of hostage-taking constitute crimes against humanity. It's noteworthy that this was a quasi-judicial decision rendered in the case of Canadians being kidnapped in Iran. Nothing was done about that decision. This was years ago.

Now, a second independent UN body, the fact-finding mission on Iran, has again determined that the criteria for crimes against humanity have been met. There are a number of considerations—scope, scale, the widespread and systematic nature of the engagement—but we need not go into what constitutes crimes against humanity. Oftentimes, it is *prima facie*. We see, based on the testimony and the very moving and eloquent remarks of my colleagues on the panel here, that what we are seeing in Iran is unprecedented, and it demands global justice.

Canada can be a leader here. There is an opportunity that exists within our laws and frameworks to stand up, speak out and take action on behalf of the brave Iranian people, and in particular Canadians who have both historically and currently been affected by this regime, whether on Canadian soil or within Iran.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: According to your work and other public reports, there are approximately 700 persons affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps who are currently residing here in Canada.

The RCMP, as you mentioned, will launch structural investigations as soon as there are serious allegations of international crimes with a connection to Canada.

In your opinion, are all the elements in place for the RCMP to launch those investigations?

I understand that no one wants to interfere or tell the police what to do. In your opinion though, as an outside legal expert, do you think the elements are in place for police forces to launch those investigations?

[English]

Brandon Silver: That's exactly right. There is a very strong Canadian nexus, both in terms of passive jurisdiction—the victims have been Canadian, again, both historically and currently—and also, prospectively, in terms of active jurisdiction. There is a high likelihood that some Canadians may even be involved in perpetrating the crimes, when you consider that there are 700 IRGC-connected individuals alleged to be in Canada, and likely more who are fleeing the regime or who may have some connections in Canada. There's a good chance that not only are the victims Canadian, but there may be some perpetrators who are Canadian. There's certainly the presence in Canada of perpetrators, regardless.

Again, as some of my colleagues on the panel mentioned, first, while we commend the actions that the Canadian government has taken, under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to exclude the entry of members of the IRGC, the fact is that there are many who are already here and likely to evade those important policies and provisions. When some of these officials are caught in Canada, they should not be deported back to Iran—which is the current policy of the Canadian government—to keep killing people. They should be prosecuted when they're caught here. They should stand trial in Canada, and their victims, who are often in Canada, can take the stand and educate the world about what's happened.

Second, it would assist in ensuring that they don't end up in Canada if we were to undertake this structural investigation and make sure that Canadian Iranian victims—who, as Nazanin shared earlier today, often witness, in Canadian streets, the jailers, judges and police officers who persecuted them—have a single destination to be sharing this information with law enforcement so that it can be acted upon and, similarly, make sure we exclude these perpetrators from entering our country in the first place.

• (1715)

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Ms. Afshin-Jam MacKay, you mentioned Irwin Cotler earlier. My first question was about how safe someone might feel as a strong and free voice in a democratic country while there are also aggressions in our country. After Mr. Cotler was targeted, the House of Commons adopted a motion condemning those aggressions.

How safe does someone in Canada feel who freely and publicly opposes the regime?

[English]

The Chair: Give a short answer, please. The time is over by 20 seconds.

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: I'll also answer in English, just to make it quick.

The answer is no, we do not feel safe. We all escaped Iran—I in 1979, at the start of the revolution, when my father was tortured and almost executed by the revolutionary guard. We came here to have a safe life, to have freedom, to have democracy, to have the things that every human being should have.

Instead, I look over my shoulder. When I came in here, I looked behind me to see who was in this room, who might be from the

regime, who might be standing at the corner when I go outside. This is not just me; we all feel it. It's not just the activists; it's regular people who are just going out to protest. Do you know what happens the next day? Their family inside Iran gets a call. They are told, "I saw your daughter out in the protest. You better stop them or you're going to be victimized next."

None of us feel safe, and this should not be the feeling that we have here in Canada. We need to put an end to this regime so that not only our Iranian brothers and sisters feel safe back home, but also Canadians feel safe. Irwin Cotler is not even Iranian.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the biggest exporter of terrorism on the planet, supplying billions of dollars to Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. This regime has caused so much terror in the world. They bombed the AMIA embassy in Argentina. They've employed—

The Chair: Thank you. We'll give you a chance. You had two minutes; I have to stop you, sorry.

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Sorry, this is my last point.

They hired Hells Angels here in Canada to assassinate a couple in Maryland, near Washington.

The Chair: Sorry, I have to be fair with everyone.

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: I understand. I'm sorry.

The Chair: I invite Mr. Zuberi to take the floor for five minutes, please.

Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here and sharing with us in the committee, and also with all of those who are watching, what's happening in Iran. There are a lot of people who are learning about what's happening in Iran, and a lot of people who are as dialed in as you are, knowing what's happening and following it.

What advice would you give to those who are dialed in to effectively communicate with the Canadian population about what is happening on the ground? Do you have any advice? I feel there is somewhat of a disconnect between the average Canadian, even those who care about human rights, and those who know what's happening within Iran.

I'll open up the floor for responses.

• (1720)

The Chair: Would anyone like to answer?

Kaveh Shahrooz: I think that's an excellent question.

There are a couple of things I would like to communicate to average Canadians who care about human rights but maybe aren't following this story as closely.

First of all, I think it's important for them to know what Iranians are fighting for. Iran is, for all intents and purposes, an apartheid state, based on gender, based on religion and based on ethnicity. Its economy is in free fall. As I mentioned in my remarks, it cannot provide water. The very basics of life, it cannot provide to its people. I think Canadians should understand the level of desperation that Iranians feel, having lived under this regime for nearly 50 years. That's point number one that I would make.

The second thing I'd want to communicate to your average Canadian is a point that's been made a couple of times here on this panel. This is not simply an Iranian problem; this is also a Canadian problem. This is a problem where our former attorney general and minister of justice has to live with security because this regime is going to try to kill him. It is a problem when the IRGC shoots down a plane and kills many Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

The problem will not stay confined there. We have to deal with the regime there so that we can live safely here.

Sameer Zuberi: Thank you.

If others have points that haven't been mentioned yet, I'd like to open it up to them.

Brandon Silver: Sure. Thank you, MP Zuberi.

If I may, I'd be remiss not to mention the cases and causes of political prisoners. They are a looking glass into the wider mass domestic repression and the external aggression of Iran.

One particular case is that of Dr. Ahmad Reza Jalali, for whom the Raoul Wallenberg Centre serves as legal counsel. He is one of the longest-held political prisoners in Iran. He is also a hostage, a dual Swedish Iranian national who has been sentenced to execution simply for being a doctor, for helping people. That tells a human story that the statistics sometimes belie, and it requires global action and attention. Even with pariah states, when they know they're being scrutinized, that could have a life-saving effect for individuals like Dr. Jalali.

Again, it exemplifies the broader policy issues at play and the weaponization of the judiciary, of state violence enforced to arbitrarily detain foreign nationals and to target, as Nazanin shared in her testimony, doctors who are treating sick patients. They are criminalized. Lawyers who are serving as counsel to the innocent are jailed, and journalists who are simply reporting the news are harassed and murdered. It's important to shine a global spotlight on this and seek to redress it.

There was discussion of targeted Magnitsky sanctions earlier, and I would simply take the opportunity to reaffirm and reiterate the urgency of pursuing this. While Canada has commendably implemented extensive targeted sanctions, we have missed the foremost architect of all these crimes you've heard described today, and that is the Ayatollah. There is no valid argument against sanctioning a head of state. We've done so with Nicolás Maduro and Vladimir Putin. We should do so with the Ayatollah and with all those who are the architects of the ongoing repression in Iran, both to name and shame them and to ensure that, again, our Canadian sovereignty and standards are not being corrupted by the corrosive influence of their ill-gotten gains, where they may send their family members or even themselves invest or launder their money in Canada.

It would send a powerful statement of solidarity with the Iranian people.

I will just reiterate our recommendations: sanction the Ayatollah as the architect of repression, launch a structural investigation into crimes against humanity, and engage bilaterally and multilaterally with the U.K. and within the G7 to ensure that our allies proscribe and share intelligence and act against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard's war.

Sameer Zuberi: Thank you.

I'll just say that in the rest of the testimony I hope to hear more about what's happening with the prisoners and what we can do to support them, those who are imprisoned right now.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

Now I'd like to ask Ms. Kronis to take the floor for five minutes.

Tamara Kronis: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Now that I have a bit more of an opportunity, first of all I want to thank you all for sharing your experiences, your vulnerabilities and your fears, especially Ms. Daemi, who's doing it in the middle of the night. It's almost two o'clock in the morning where she is.

I really want to acknowledge those statements, because the Persian community in my riding has been desperately worried about their loved ones. More than that, they've been, in many cases, reliving experiences of their own that caused them to come to Canada. The issue is one that's also deeply personal for me, because 30 years ago the Iranian regime sponsored a suicide bus bombing that killed one of my friends and classmates, Alisa Flatow.

The reason I bring that up is the longitudinal aspect of this. There have been a variety of sanctions against Iran over the years. There have been statements by governments; there have been UN resolutions; there have been lawsuits; there have been targeted strikes. There have been a lot of measures taken over the decade, all to no avail, because the regime has persisted.

Ms. Afshin-Jam MacKay, I would like to start with you and just ask for your perspective on what keeps the Iranian regime going. Why does this regime continue to survive?

• (1725)

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: The regime continues to survive because it sucks the blood out of every single Iranian person, whether it's their money, their dignity or their human rights. They have amassed it, and what do they do with it? Instead of serving its people, what it does is spend it on terrorism and repression and hype up its own mafia, because the IRGC really is like a mafia that holds the purse strings of the entire nation. They help one another. At the same time, neighbouring authoritarian regimes prop up this particular regime. They feed off the same repression handbook, and they don't end up serving their own people.

I'll just stop there.

Tamara Kronis: Thank you very much.

I just want to make sure that I give my colleague, MP Ho, a chance to also ask some questions.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Thank you.

My question is for Ms. Afshin-Jam MacKay.

You mentioned a role that Canada can play in the support of the crisis management centre for technocratic experts during a potential regime transition, if or when that happens. Could you expand on that a little bit more? What role do you think transitional leaders can play?

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Yes. When the “Woman, Life, Freedom” revolutionary protests happened, I noticed at that time that there was a lot of duplication of work among different Iranian diaspora groups with maybe five people creating databases on who had been killed and who had been injured. One by one, I started to ask some of these Iranian diaspora groups to come together to share, so they could form synergies in order to be more efficient and effective.

What I realized, by the end of it, was that we had amassed 100 Iranian diaspora groups and 200 very prominent, active Iranian diaspora leaders, all with varying technocratic degrees of expertise in various fields, such as communication, human rights and medical. I realized that with all these different single entities and islands, if we could somehow centralize this, we could be so much more efficient.

That's the premise of that. We're already working together and doing great things. If the Government of Canada, for example, were to give us a venue or some support, we could really expand and have much more output and productivity.

Vincent Ho: This is my final question.

Do you think there's a role to play for Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi in that transitional phase? Could you elaborate on that in any way?

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Is that question for me?

Vincent Ho: Yes.

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Absolutely.

Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi has called himself the transitional leader of this movement. While many people follow him and agree with his stance, there are other people from other ethnic communities and political leanings who see a different transitional leader in their own communities.

I believe that the crown prince could have a very strong unifying capacity if he were to open up to these different groupings and allow for checks and balances, as well as a council of representatives that would help guide that transitional phase.

• (1730)

The Chair: Thank you.

I now invite Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe to speak.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor for five minutes.

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

Mr. Silver, I forgot to ask you a question earlier for the benefit of the committee and the analysts.

Based on your expertise, once again, is the widespread and systematic nature of these human rights violations clearly established today?

[*English*]

Brandon Silver: Yes, there are clearly crimes against humanity that have been committed and that are ongoing as we speak, which meet the threshold for a structural investigation.

On the RCMP website, if you were to go to the structural investigation and sensitive investigation page of the RCMP, they set out their criteria for opening an investigation into crimes against humanity, and very clearly those standards have been met.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you very much, Mr. Silver.

Mr. Abeyat, you haven't had much of a chance to speak. I'm offering you a bit of time in case you would like to add something that hasn't been said. There have been a lot of questions and answers.

Is there anything you absolutely want to add, for the benefit of the committee?

[*English*]

Farough Abeyat: My colleague did a great job on including everything that was said. I would like to add more about the Ahwazi people and what they've been going through. It's the same as everyone else; however, the only thing is that it's not being talked about as much as the Iranians. In terms of the Ahwazi people and everything that's currently going on, it's not being talked about. It has gone unnoticed. It's similar to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but the only thing that's different is that it's not talked about.

The Ahwazi people are going through the same thing. Everything is similar. They've been tortured and killed. Everything that's been happening to them is going against everything that's humanitarian and correct. As everyone has said, I hope we can find a solution to give the Ahwazi people's voices more awareness.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Ms. Afshin-Jam MacKay, I'd like to come back to my Conservative colleague's last question, because I think we can discuss sensitive issues here.

As members of Parliament, we are approached by all kinds of people asking us to align with their positions. In the case of Iran, we have been approached by followers of the Shah's son and by the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. Ms. Radjavi's National Council of Resistance of Iran has also reached out to us.

Shouldn't we first and foremost make sure that we focus on the abuses being committed by the regime right now, and perhaps be cautious about aligning ourselves with certain groups, some of which are more controversial than others?

[English]

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: I want to make it very clear that the Iranian people are united. We're united on the fact that we all want a change of regime. We want democracy. We want the rule of law. We want a constitution based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are all united on this front.

Just as we have here, there's a diversity of political alignment. What's prudent at the moment is to put our political differences aside. I think that, as a parliamentarian, you should meet with all voices, but understand that at the end of the day, we all are fighting for the same thing.

When the regime falls and we are presented with the ballot box, it's only at that time that people will really be able to present their political allegiance: one person, one vote. In the meantime, I think that if governments—the Canadian, U.S. and European governments—were to create a conference of some kind and invite the various political leanings, or even just invite technocratic experts in the meantime, we could really go a long way and bring freedom to our people.

• (1735)

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I think the most important message you just delivered is that you are all united.

For me, and I think for all members of the committee, it's extremely important to be able to deliver that message, and especially to send it higher up so the government actually takes concrete action and it is not just rhetoric and hot air.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

[English]

Now, I invite Madame Vandenberg to take the floor for three minutes, please.

Anita Vandenberg: I'd like to start with you, Ms. Afshin-Jam MacKay, and build on what you just said about unity. One of the things we've heard is that, unlike previously with “Woman, Life, Freedom”, in this case it's everybody out in the streets. Even though there is so much repression, even though there's so much brutality and many atrocities, people are still standing in front of the bullets. You even mentioned the safety of people here, looking over your shoulder, but you're still here testifying.

What I'd like to know is, as parliamentarians but also as leaders in our communities, how do we amplify your voices? Is there something we can do specifically to make sure that those voices are not silenced, and that all of the people who are standing so bravely are heard, despite the regime trying to do everything to silence them?

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Your voices definitely have a huge impact on what happens inside Iran. I know that this regime presents a face like it doesn't care, but I have been in this field for many years, and when I held the position of president and co-founder of the Stop Child Executions organization, it was because of members like you who were amplifying the messages of these

children who were on death row that they were freed. If there is a medical doctor, for example, who's right now facing the death penalty just because he helped serve some of the victims of this massacre, then your voices—just a simple tweet—make all the difference.

We're asking for more than just tweets, of course. We want you to make this an issue, your issue. Again, this is not an Iranian issue. This concerns the safety and security of all Canadians and the entire world.

Anita Vandenberg: Thank you very much.

Ms. Atena Daemi, you spoke about the need for a coalition of countries. You talked about perhaps leading G7 countries. Why is it really important that this be done through coalitions, that the world mobilize?

Atena Daemi: [Witness spoke in Farsi, interpreted as follows:]

I believe that, in any case, it's very important. I believe that, when there are human rights broken, democratic countries have to stand against it. It's very important, but I believe that, if it is a coalition action—I learned this from prison—as a get-together, it is power together. Coalitions are a lot more powerful than individuals.

Anita Vandenberg: Do I have time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: No. Thank you, Ms. Vandenberg.

Now I would like to invite Madame Kronis to take the floor for three minutes, please.

Tamara Kronis: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to ask this question of Mr. Silver.

You've been upfront about the involvement of the IRGC in Canada—all of you have—and the interference in our civilian life and in our political process. I'm wondering if you might be able to comment on the status of the foreign interference registry, where we're at with that and how it might help.

Brandon Silver: I appreciate that important question about Iran's transnational repression and foreign interference.

While I haven't studied the issue in great enough depth to comment on that particular question, I want to comment more generally on the need to continue holding Iran accountable for its foreign interference and transnational repression, in coordination with our allies.

I would flag that Canada's current policy, when it comes to other countries' considering proscription of the IRGC, is to quietly lobby against it. While we've designated the IRGC, we're encouraging allies not to do so, in order to maintain some sort of link or be able to have some channel there. I think that, with some pressure from parliamentarians, that can hopefully change. As the U.K. is considering it and as our High Commission in London is lobbying against it, it would be important for parliamentarians to send a message that the IRGC should be banned by our allies, as the EU just did and as the U.K. should do.

Within the G7, you referenced foreign interference. There was a very important statement that the government coordinated among the G7 when we were chair, calling out this foreign interference. It seems to conflict with that position to then be lobbying against designating the IRGC, so it might be worth engaging our allies abroad to follow suit. That might be a very effective way to limit our exposure as Canadians to this threat, if our allies join in and share intelligence and law enforcement.

• (1740)

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Shahrooz, do you want to add to that, specifically with respect to the interference of the IRGC in Canada and in Canadian politics?

Kaveh Shahrooz: Absolutely. I think it's essential that we take this issue seriously.

With respect to the registry, similar to Mr. Silver, I have to say that I haven't studied it closely enough, but foreign interference is a real thing, and it's happening in Canada. Regrettably, the commission of inquiry that we held didn't look closely enough at Iran; it looked at other malevolent actors. I really do think that it's essential that we take a closer look at Iran's foreign interference here in Canada, their role in transnational repression, their role in affecting our elections and their role in cyberwarfare here in Canada.

I think it's really essential, to circle back to an earlier point, for us to coordinate. They're not merely targeting Canada; they are trying to sow chaos across the free world, so it's really important that we do this work in coordination with like-minded countries, with other G7 nations.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, you have the floor for three minutes.

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

Mr. Silver, is there not a risk, shall we say, that Canada could be seen as a safe haven for alleged perpetrators of crimes against humanity if investigations are never launched?

Brandon Silver: Precisely.

It sends a message to the worst torturers of the Iranian regime that Canada is open to their presence here. As it is, 700 of the Ayatollah's guards see Canada as a place to send their money, to take their vacations and to send their families to be educated. That's al-

ready sending a message to Iran. When crimes against the Iranian people and Canadians are allowed to continue and the door is left open to those people, it sends the wrong message.

On the contrary, if we prosecute and launch investigations, it sends the message that those torturers and murderers are not welcome in our country. That's an important message. As the situation becomes more unstable in Iran, a lot of people will flee. Canada can be a first destination for these people. This is very urgent and sensitive. This message needs to be sent very quickly to the Iranian leadership.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Ms. Afshin-Jam Mackay, would you like to add anything?

[*English*]

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Canada is already looked upon as a haven for these regime affiliates. They bring in billions of dollars of laundered money.

I am in touch with a whistle-blower who can tell you the names, accounts and how much money was transferred from what bank to what bank, because he used to be a banker himself and knows all the transactions. I have told CSIS. I have told the police, and they do not even pick up the phone to call this man and inquire about the pages and pages of documentation he has.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: We'll talk about it again after the committee meeting.

Thank you.

Nazanin Afshin-Jam MacKay: Thank you.

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

[*English*]

On behalf of this committee, I would like to thank all of our good witnesses. Thanks for being with us. Thanks for your good answers. It gives a good illustration, a good lighting to this subcommittee. I believe every one of us here understands better the situation in Iran with what you have said in this good meeting.

Is it the will of the committee to adjourn the meeting?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

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