

Minister of  
Foreign Affairs



Ministre des  
Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

AUG 19 2011

Mr. Arsham Parsi  
Executive Director  
Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees Inc.  
20 Bay Street, 12th Floor  
Toronto ON M5J 2N8

Dear Mr. Parsi:

Thank you for your letter of June 7, 2011, in which you request a meeting to discuss human rights in Iran. I appreciate your words of congratulations on my re-election.

I am interested to learn of the work being done by you and the International Railroad for Queer Refugees, and I could meet with your organization next time I am in Toronto, depending on my schedule. This can be best coordinated if you contact my office.

As you may be aware, Canada's concerns about human rights in Iran are long-standing. As part of its ongoing efforts to promote respect for human rights in the country, Canada led the adoption of the resolution "Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran" in the Third Committee at the fall 2010 session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). This is the eighth consecutive year Canada has led this initiative. The resolution was co-sponsored by an additional 41 member states, and supported by 80 in the vote, with only 44 member states voting against it. This represented the largest margin of adoption since Canada assumed lead of this resolution in 2003.

The resolution highlights long-standing violations of human rights by the Iranian authorities, including the terribly difficult situation faced by the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community. It calls on the Government of Iran to address the substantive concerns highlighted in the report of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the specific calls for action found in previous UNGA resolution further calls on the Government of Iran to respect fully its human rights obligations, in law and in practice. Canada believes that the adoption of this resolution provides comfort to human rights defenders in Iran as it reminds them that they are not alone in their struggle to attain their human rights.

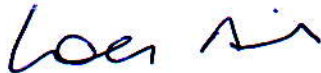
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Canada

Canada uses diplomatic channels to make Canadian views known on these issues in the hope that Iran may be convinced it is in its best interest to respect its international human rights and nuclear non-proliferation obligations. We are intent on holding Iran to account, and we welcome the work of organizations such as yours in helping us do so.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Baird". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

John Baird, P.C., M.P.