

MinistHoma Arjomand

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Open letter to Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Minister,

I fled Iran and sought political asylum in Canada fifteen years ago. I am now writing to you as a women's rights activist and as the organizer of the International Campaign Against Shari'a Courts In Canada in order to express my strong indignation at the brutal murder of the Iranian born Canadian journalist, Zahra Kazemi, by the criminal Islamist regime of Iran.

Upon receiving the news of this horrific murder, I expressed my sympathy for her family in various ways, and have since actively tried, as much as I could have, to play a part in strengthening the existing protest against this heinous state crime. The slaying of Zahra Kazemi was not the first murderous crime committed by that religious regime, and will not be the last. Tens of my own close associates who were all women's or workers' rights activists were slain by the police and judicial systems of the Islamic regime in Iran. I have directly experienced living under the rule of a regime of religious terror. It is precisely out of this experience, as well as my first hand knowledge of Islamic laws and their capacity for anti-human acts, that I have, alongside thousands of other Canadians, began a relentless, extensive campaign against Islamic tribunals in Canada, which are in the process of being established in the province of Ontario. Various Islamist currents, utilizing the provincial Arbitration Act of 1991, are involved in promoting this cause.

I am writing to you today, however, to specifically state that a regime founded on the principles of terror, imprisonment, torture, execution, and stoning; a regime with a judicial system resting upon unjust religious laws, gender discriminations, and denial of all social and personal freedoms; a regime whose judicial authorities are themselves torturers and murderous, e.g., in the case of Zahra Kazemi, such a regime, can deliver nothing but travesties of justice through its so-called courts of law. Expecting justice to be served by the organs of such a regime is a grand illusion per se.

In view of the above, the International Campaign Against Shari'a Courts In Canada demands:

- 1- The legitimacy of the courts in the Islamic Republic of Iran to be completely and publicly rejected by the Canadian Government. This is a minimum standard that any government, as well as any political organization, is expected to observe in adopting a principled approach towards this crime;

- 2- An international tribunal to be set up to consider this case. It must have the necessary authority to summon all and every official and agent of the Islamic Republic of Iran directly or indirectly involved in this crime.

Mr. Minister,

The above demands are but basic demands of the oppressed Iranian people, along with millions of civilized people across the world. If the Canadian Government is genuinely resolved in its demand for the criminals involved in the murder of Zahra Kazemi to be punished and the justice served, it can adopt and support only such a stand. It represents the lowest standard by which to judge how serious any body is in demanding the resolution of this case. Unfortunately, this has not been the attitude of the Canadian Government so far.

Our campaign and I will make every effort to rally all humanitarian and progressive organizations, as well as all the justice seeking people, and all those who detest repressive governments round the above demands. We expect the Canadian Government to break all its diplomatic relations with the Iranian regime. We also expect it to support our efforts and thus respond favourably to our demands for the justice to be served in this case.

Respectfully yours,

Homa Arjmand

Organizer- International Campaign Against Shari'a Courts in Canada

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