



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-01155**

BY: **MR. KENT (THORNHILL)**

DATE: **FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE CHRYSIA FREELAND**

Response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Iran

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada was relieved by Dr. Hoodfar's release in September 2016. This Government was actively and constructively engaged in Dr. Hoodfar's case, and worked for her release and return to Canada. Canadian officials also provided consular assistance to her family throughout the entire process. In the absence of diplomatic representation in Iran, Canada worked closely with other countries, which were instrumental in helping secure Dr. Hoodfar's release – most notably, Oman and Italy. On September 26, 2016, the Prime Minister issued a statement on the release of Dr. Homa Hoodfar who had been held in jail in Iran since June 2016

<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/09/26/statement-prime-minister-canada-release-doctor-homa-hoodfar>

The situation of Mr. Malekpour is of high concern to this government. The Government of Canada remains extremely concerned about his case and are in regular contact with his Canada-based relatives and advocates. The current lack of Canadian diplomatic presence in Iran severely limits the Government of Canada's ability to make direct representations on important issues and enact progress on various files, including on consular and human rights cases.

Our policy of gradual and cautious re-engagement is aimed at protecting Canadian citizens and Canadian interests. Our decisions are always guided by our duty to ensure the safety and security of Canadians. This will improve our ability to directly work on consular and human rights cases.

The Government of Canada will enact this policy with our eyes wide open. Iran remains a country of serious concern and the Canada will continue to voice our concerns and work with the international community to call on Iran to respect its human rights obligations. Canada will continue to hold Iran to account on its nuclear program, ballistic missile program, support for terrorism, regional policies and human rights violations. For example, in 2016, this government added sanctions that targeted Iran's ballistic missile program. Furthermore, for many years, Canada has successfully led the annual United Nations General Assembly resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran. In 2016 the resolution received the most support with 85 member states in favour. This resolution sends a strong message to the Iranian government that the international community remains concerned about persistent human rights violations in Iran.

The former government's policy of isolation helped no one: not Canadians, not Iranians, not our friends and allies in the region. This Government knows that dialogue is the most effective way to address global security issues, hold Iran to account on human rights and resolve consular and human rights cases.

This Government is focused on making real progress in the security Canadians and of our friends and allies and on promoting the protection of human rights worldwide.