



## Canada must not be a safe haven for former IRGC commanders

We, the undersigned human rights organizations, share serious concerns regarding known rights violator Morteza Talaei's [recent travel](#) to Canada. We urge the Canadian government to take immediate action to uphold its stated commitment to human rights and ensure that impunity at home, does not mean impunity abroad. Allowing Morteza Talaei to freely enter Canada sends a dangerous message; a message that is an affront to Iranians who have themselves sought refuge in Canada.

Since cutting diplomatic ties with Iran in 2013, many Iranians continue to face challenges in obtaining visas to Canada, which is seemingly not the case for the former IRGC commander. When asked how Talaei's presence in Canada made them feel one Iranian said, "I feel betrayed by the Canadian government for allowing those that suppressed us in Iran to easily enter the country I now call home."

In 2017, Canada passed the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, ([Global Magnitsky legislation](#)) designed to designate foreign officials complicit in, among other things, gross violations of human rights. The act is in place, in part, to protect refugees from foreign nationals deemed to be a threat to safety and security. We call on the Canadian government to investigate Morteza Talaei, in particular for, "[gross violations](#) of internationally-recognized human rights against individuals in any foreign state who seek to obtain, exercise, defend or promote internationally-recognized human rights and freedoms..."

Human rights organizations have [documented](#) seemingly endless violations stemming from Talaei's relentless intolerance and brutality. As a former Tehran police chief, Talaei commanded a force notorious for mass arrests, beatings, and torture. Talaei himself is known to have orchestrated widespread suppression of peaceful protesters including student protesters. He was police chief at the time, Iranian Canadian citizen, [Zahra Kazemi](#), was tortured, ultimately culminating in her death. The investigation of her death was [said to be](#) handled by Tehran's police. Talaei is also the founder of what some call Tehran's "hijab police," a force committed to combating what he called 'manifestations of indecency' referring to women he deemed indecently covered. In addition, as a former Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

commander, an entity widely sanctioned for serious human rights abuses, his brutality runs deep.

The Prime Minister has [declared](#) Canada to be a safe haven to “those fleeing persecution, terror, and war” a place where “all are welcome.” A safe haven for those persecuted must not allow individuals like Morteza Talaei to enter freely. Human rights violators must not be included in the Prime Minister's “everyone is welcome” campaign.

#### UNDERSIGNED ORGANIZATIONS

**The Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran**

**Association for The Human Rights of The Azerbaijani People In Iran (AHRAZ)**

**Human Rights Activists in Iran (HRA)**

**Impact Iran**

**Iran Human Rights**

**Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva (KMMK-G)**

**Siamak Pourzand Foundation (SPF)**

**Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM)**