



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 029**

**PUBLIC PART ONLY - PARTIE PUBLIQUE SEULEMENT**

Monday, October 3, 2022

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Chair: Mr. Ali Ehsassi





# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Monday, October 3, 2022

• (1750)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.)):** We're resuming the meeting in public.

Before we get this meeting under way, I want to remind everyone.... Mr. Genuis just asked the clerk a question of resource management, and the clerk advised me that she received an email earlier this morning that this meeting can only go until 6 p.m.

We will now go to where we left off last time. As the members will recall, a motion was moved by Ms. Bendayan. An amendment was brought forward by Mr. Genuis on Wednesday, September 28. Should the members like, I can read the entire motion brought by Ms. Bendayan and Mr. Genuis's amendment. I could also simply go over Mr. Genuis's amendment.

Is that necessary? Okay.

The floor is currently Mr. Genuis's, and then we'll have Mr. Bergeron's.

Go ahead, Mr. Genuis. No? Okay.

We now move to Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron, the floor is yours.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since we're talking about Mr. Genuis' amendment, I would like to let my esteemed colleague know that I didn't particularly appreciate his calling a debate in the House of Commons this afternoon on another issue the committee is reporting on, at the same time that we are all gathered here to discuss the current report on vaccine equity. I appreciate the urgency of the situation, but I think the debate in the House could certainly have taken place tomorrow, so that the committee members could have participated in both debates, the one on the vaccine equity report and the one on the so-called referendums Russia is holding in Ukraine. Let's just say it wasn't particularly tactful of Mr. Genuis to proceed that way given how it affected his fellow committee members.

Coming back to his amendment, I will say that I understand why he wants to have the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the IRGC, listed as a terrorist entity. I would even call it a legitimate request, but I'm not sure I see the connection between that and Ms. Bendayan's motion, which deals specifically with the killing of

Ms. Amini by the so-called morality police and the protests that ensued in Iran and all over the world.

Tying together two issues that are significantly different from one another is simply an attempt at a two-for-one, in my view. I would have preferred it if Mr. Genuis had put forward a separate motion that sought specifically to have the government list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. Instead, we have this half-baked attempt at piggybacking this issue on Ms. Bendayan's motion, which should stand alone.

For that reason, I am unfortunately going to have to vote against Mr. Genuis's motion, not because I disagree with the substance, but because I disagree with the form.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bergeron.

The next person on the list is Ms. Bendayan.

[Translation]

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, thank you for giving me the floor again. I actually wasn't going to say anything right away, but since Mr. Bergeron brought it up, I, too, would have liked to participate in the discussion on Ukraine that took place in the House today at the same time as the committee was meeting.

As for Mr. Genuis's amendment to my motion, I am particularly interested in his reasons. As was pointed out in the House today, the matter of the IRGC was voted on by the House four years ago. Accordingly, I urge Mr. Genuis to speak to his amendment and explain to the committee how what he is proposing relates to the killing of Ms. Amini.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Bendayan.

We'll now go to Mr. Oliphant.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I want to thank Ms. Bendayan for the motion, which I think is an important one. Now that we're on the amendment, I'm going to dig in it a bit.

As you know, we are in public. I thought this part of the meeting would be in camera, but I'm glad it's in public because it gives me a chance to talk about a few things in this committee that I think are really important to put into the context of both the amendment and the motion.

In June of this year, I attended the Northern Secondary School graduation. The Northern Secondary School is around the corner from my home. It's in my riding. I got to the graduation ceremony, and I looked out at the several hundred—300 or 400—young people graduating from high school. I had not planned on having an emotional response, but as I looked out at the kids, Maya Zibaie was not there.

Maya Zibaie was in grade 10 when she and her mother went to Iran to visit family. She was on PS752, which 1,000 days ago was shot down by a regime that was complicit, if not.... There has been a forensic study that does not draw a direct line between the government of Iran and the shooting down of the plane. However, the onus, the burden of proof, is on Iran to say and to prove that they were not engaged. Canada has, over these last thousand days, attempted in every way possible and will continue to attempt in every way possible to get justice for Mahmoud Zibaie, who lost his daughter Maya and his wife Shahrzad.

I think the issues in Iran since the so-called revolution 43 years ago have been on my mind and the minds of Canadians. We watched a theist, Islamicist government take over a society that had been deeply rooted in science and technology, in culture and linguistics, and in trade and commerce. It was a leading Islamic country. We have seen with horror how things, instead of getting better, have gotten worse for the people of Iran.

The benefit to Canada is that we have been the proud and gracious recipients of tens of thousands of Iranian Canadians, many of them identifying as Persian, but many not, including Azeris and other Iranian Canadians. I am very proud to represent a large group of them from my riding, who continue to have people-to-people ties with Iran, deep connections to what's going on in Iran and deep pain.

That is not just about this most recent horrific killing by the so-called morality police in Iran of Jina Mahsa Amini. I tend to want to use her Kurdish name, as well as her name in Farsi. I believe her name on her passport is Magda, but her Kurdish roots are important for us to recognize here as well.

Canada is a country that has attempted to live out our diversity and multicultural reality. It's not just, as we say, a fact of reality. It's a choice that diversity is a reality, and inclusion is a choice. That is something that we think Iran would benefit from, but it doesn't want to.

Since this evolution of the revolutionary government in Iran, we have seen atrocities continue, whether they're at neighbours' expenses, including the most recent bombing last weekend in Iraq, support for insurgents and other violence in Yemen, or the constant, persistent threat on Israel. It is a pathological threat to Israel that has continued and that has gained certain momentum in certain neighbouring countries from time to time; however, we know that Iran is at the epicentre of that.

• (1755)

I'm very glad the Government of Canada, when it was a Conservative government, made strong choices about Iran. We know that was an important thing to do at that time, and I supported it.

Iranian Canadians have had a variety of opinions since that time, including on the closure of the embassy, which they have pushed to reopen, but our government has not reopened the embassy. Obviously it was something that was being talked about at one point. However, things have not settled to the point where we could establish normal diplomatic relations with Iran. As we have looked at the last number of years, sanctions—

**The Chair:** Mr. Oliphant, I hate to interrupt you, but there is only a minute remaining before six o'clock.

• (1800)

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** I have more to say.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I want to raise that it seems as though we may run out of time today. The convention has been established, though, that if we run out of resources and we're in the middle of something, we would suspend and not adjourn. I suggest you follow that precedent and suspend the meeting in light of the resource situation but not adjourn the meeting, and that we return to this subject as soon as possible.

I'm very much looking forward to allowing Mr. Oliphant to finish his remarks and bring them to whatever natural conclusion he wants and to discuss that issue with the public. I look forward to the vote on this amendment.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** On that point of order, if I may, I would continue, but I'd like to speak on—

**The Chair:** Would everyone please wait until they're recognized before they speak.

That goes for Mr. Genuis as well as for Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Oliphant.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** On that point of order, my concern is that this committee has accepted, at the request of His Majesty's loyal opposition, a schedule up until the end of October. We have work to do, so I will leave it up to the chair's judgment whether we suspend or adjourn. However, I know that any motion may be brought up when a member reaches his or her allotted time to speak.

That's on the point of order. May I continue?

**The Chair:** It's six o'clock, Mr. Oliphant.

I am not aware of any rule that suggests that it has to be suspended. Just to confirm, I will consult with the clerk to see what the clerk has to say about this.

As far as the clerk is aware and as far as I am aware, there is no rule that the committee has to be suspended if resources are not available.

On that point, it is past six o'clock. I will adjourn the meeting.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Chair, just on a point of order, it is convention—

**The Chair:** The meeting has been adjourned. I have checked with the clerk on that convention, Mr. Genuis—

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** You set that convention. You were the one who suspended it through May and June.

**The Chair:** I just spoke with the clerk on that convention, Mr. Genuis, and there is no such convention.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** This is a serious game with a very serious issue you're playing with, Mr. Chair. I know it's important to your constituents, so I'm disappointed.

**The Chair:** That's perfectly fine, and I'm disappointed that again you weren't recognized and you spoke.

The meeting is adjourned.

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