

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Government of Canada should vigorously continue its efforts to achieve a full accounting from the Government of Iran for the illegal detention, torture and murder of Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi, and should pursue all avenues of redress that will result in a just and satisfactory resolution.

Since Mrs Kazemi's tragic death in July 2003, the Government has demanded a full, transparent and credible investigation that will have real consequences for those responsible. When the Iranian protest failed to meet such standard legal requirements, the Government responded with significant diplomatic sanctions, such as the recall of our Ambassador for consultations on two occasions.

The Iranian justice system has yet to complete its consideration of this case. Following the acquittal of the accused in July 2004, the Kazemi family's Iranian lawyers have filed a request to appeal the verdict. The Iranian judiciary is expected to rule shortly on whether it will hear the appeal. The Government will continue to monitor this process closely, expressing any concerns as required, and working to ensure that impunity is denied to the perpetrators. Once the legal process in Iran has reached its conclusion, the Government will determine whether any further actions may be required.

The Government has also drawn heightened international attention to the particular circumstances of Ms Kazemi's death, including through direct engagement with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and like-minded countries, who have indicated their willingness to raise the issue with Iranian authorities. We have also raised the case in discussions with the UN Special Mechanisms for human rights in Geneva, which have a particularly valuable role to play in observing conditions and holding the Iranian Government to its human rights obligations.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Canada should at the same time explore ways to increase constructive contacts with Iranian civil society through educational, cultural and other exchanges, private sector and NGO links.

The Government's policy of controlled engagement with Iran deliberately places certain restrictions on contacts, including those on trade in controlled goods, on the opening of consulates, and on direct air links. These restrictions reflect the Government's serious concerns with Iran's behaviour on nuclear issues, human rights and terrorism. As there is no official development assistance programme in Iran, resources available to promote contacts with civil society are limited. However, within the limits of the policy framework and existing funding envelopes, the Government has pursued constructive contacts and dialogue. Canadian firms are active in Iran, particularly in the oil and gas, resources, and agriculture sectors. The Government will continue to explore opportunities for academic and cultural exchanges on matters of mutual interest. The Iranian-Canadian community's own linkages into Iran can also serve to assist in these endeavours.