



## Empowerment through unity!

President's Report  
ICC President: Bijan Ahmadi  
Annual General Meeting, May 28, 2017  
Council Chamber, North York Civic Centre, 2PM

### President's report

#### Building the organization

- Planning & Prioritization
- Working professionally
- Expanding ICC's reach
- Expanding ICC's resources

#### Advancing our community

- Raising awareness about the priorities of our community
- Promoting political participation in the Iranian Canadian community
- Informing elected officials about our priorities

## Developed a prioritized plan for our work

### Planning

- Clarified the mission and the vision of the organization based on the bylaws.
- Prepared a 2-year action plan.

### Prioritization

- Priorities are decided by the Board of Directors elected through the AGM process.
- **+ Series of community consultations were conducted for the first time in the ICC.**

## Conducted rounds of community consultations

- Online questionnaire for ICC members and general public.
- In-person consultation meeting with public.
- Consultation session at Parya Seniors Day.
- Forum for representatives of around 20 Iranian-Canadian Non-Profit and Charitable Organizations.
- Online questionnaire for Iranian Canadian experts, faculty members and activists.
- In person meeting with Iranian Canadian elected officials and former federal candidates.
- In December 2016 organized a public consultation session in Vancouver.
- ICC should continue consultations and update its priorities on a regular basis.

Building the organization

# Consultation sessions



Building the organization

# Consulted with Iranian Canadian elected officials and former federal candidates



## Building the organization

We used online questionnaires to reach broader public and Iranian Canadian experts



## Building the organization



## ICC policy priorities

The Iranian Canadian Congress have been advocating for the following priority issues:

- Re-establishing relations between Canada and Iran.
- Eliminating banking restrictions and other problems caused by Canada's sanctions on Iran.
- Combating racism and discrimination.
- Improving the accreditation process of foreign trained professionals.
- Increasing the participation of Iranian Canadians in the Canadian political process.

## Our Mission

### Advocacy

Advancing the interests of the Iranian Canadian community.

### Education

Providing knowledge, resources and tools necessary to enable informed participation of our community in the political system.

### Community Building

Promoting participation and engagement among Iranian Canadians.

Encouraging collaboration and cooperation among Iranian Canadian NGOs.

### Image Building

Promoting Iranian culture and values and upholding the prestige, dignity and success of Iranian Canadians.

## Working Professionally

- Recruited expert team members for the Policy and PR committees.
- Worked with policy advisors and experts in PR, marketing and communications for major projects and initiatives (e.g. Bill S-219 campaign, Simorgh Gala, Iran-Canada e-petition, Iran-Canada press conference).
- Established consistent and professional procedure for media relations.
- Established and documented formal processes and protocols for the work of the organization.
- Centralized record keeping on secure and official cloud servers to ensure security, confidentiality and continuity of the organization's documents.
- Implemented professional book keeping practices for the organization.

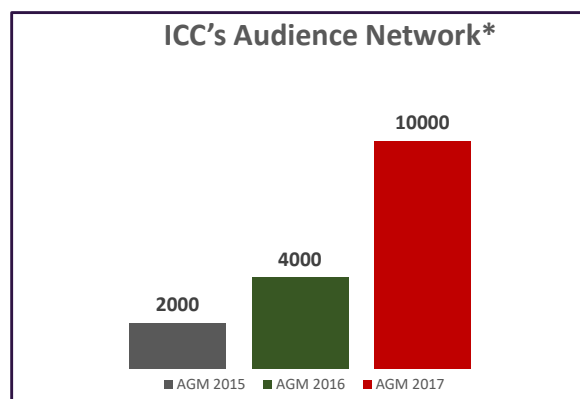
## Expanding ICC Geographically

- For the first time in the decade long history of the ICC we have recruited local volunteer teams in Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary, Windsor and Saskatoon.
- Currently we have around 15 local volunteers in these cities.
- ICC successfully hosted a first discussion session with our community members in Vancouver in December 2016.



## Expanding ICC's Audience Network

By implementing a successful communication and outreach plan we have increased the number of supporters in our audience network from 4,000 (in May 2016) to 10,000 people from across Canada (in May 2017).



**150% growth in 12 months.**

\* Our audience network includes all people subscribed to ICC communication channels. The number is a close estimate.

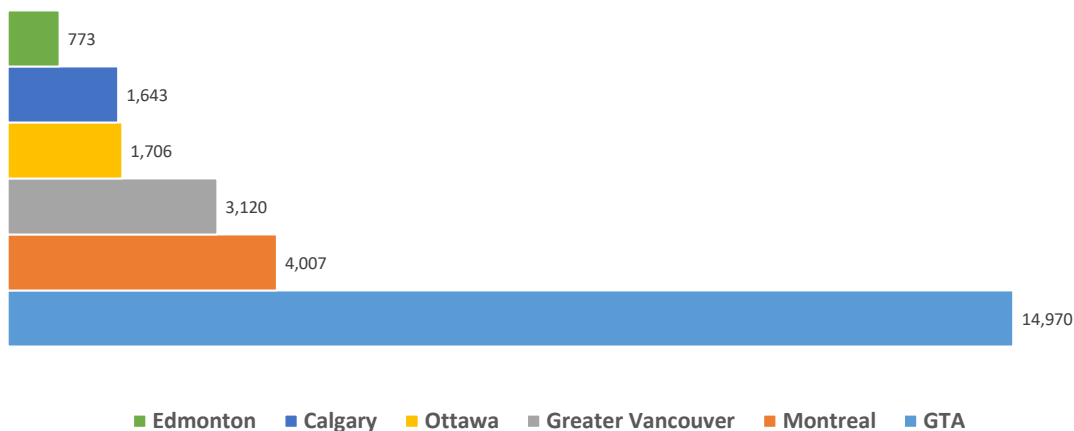
# Expanding & Growing Our Communication Channels



**Sample statistics from ICC Facebook page.  
24-month growth in number of ICC Facebook subscribers.**

# Expanding ICC's audience nationwide

Sample Statistics from ICC Facebook page. Our reach on Facebook in the past 28 days.



## Building the organization

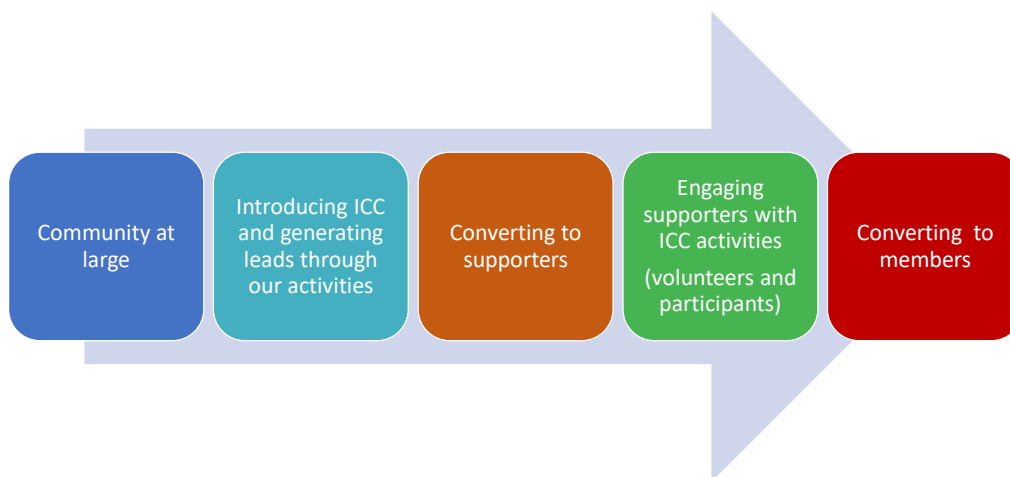
## The board implemented a new membership recruitment strategy



- The board studied the pattern of ICC membership recruitment in the past 10 years. In previous years ICC membership number has been mainly dependent on the level of competition at the annual board elections. This is unstable and inconsistent for the organization!
- Some of the members recruited through the membership campaign in 2015 did not have enough information about the ICC, and the organization failed to engage and retain them in 2015-2016.
- ICC needs resources and proper infrastructure for growing its membership base. Administrative and financial resources are necessary to be able to serve higher number of members. Building needed infrastructure for online participation of members is necessary for membership growth (e.g. online voting).
- Building the brand, a portfolio and raising awareness about the ICC activities and its achievements are necessary steps for recruiting more members.

## Building the organization

## The implemented membership strategy relies on engagement and participation



## More resources for the organization

- Leased a permanent office location. The permanent office space has enabled the ICC to present itself professionally. The office has been used as the main location for the activities and meetings of ICC directors and volunteers.
- Recruited over 50 volunteers to help the ICC in different projects and initiatives.
- Launched summer internship program with financial support from a government grant to provide the organization with essential human resources needed.
- Organized a fundraising event. Lessons learned from the fundraising event will help the ICC in organizing its future fundraising initiatives.
- Launched online donations and executed email based fundraising campaigns.
- Started building a network of donors.
- The ICC needs to substantially increase its fundraising capability. However, during the 2016-2017 term the fundraising capacity of the organization has increased significantly in compare to previous years.

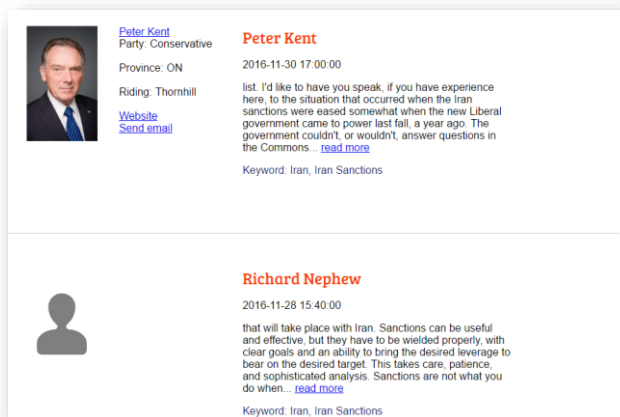
## Summer internship program

- During summer of 2016, for the first time we launched a successful internship program. The program provided 6 university students the opportunity to develop their skills while helping their fellow community members.
- 2017 summer internship program is already planned and will be announced soon.



## Online tools: “Iran” in Parliament

Through a successful partnership with ASL19 a first of its kind web application was developed and added to the website of the ICC for monitoring news related to Iran in the House of Commons.




[Peter Kent](#)  
Party: Conservative  
Province: ON  
Riding: Thornhill  
[Website](#)  
[Send email](#)

**Peter Kent**  
2016-11-30 17:00:00

list. I'd like to have you speak, if you have experience here, to the situation that occurred when the Iran sanctions were eased somewhat when the new Liberal government came to power last fall, a year ago. The government couldn't, or wouldn't, answer questions in the Commons. [read more](#)

Keyword: Iran, Iran Sanctions

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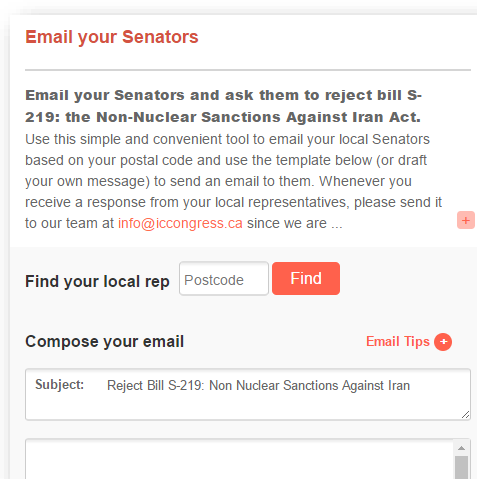
**Richard Nephew**  
2016-11-28 15:40:00

that will take place with Iran. Sanctions can be useful and effective, but they have to be wielded properly, with clear goals and an ability to bring the desired leverage to bear on the desired target. This takes care, patience, and sophisticated analysis. Sanctions are not what you do when... [read more](#)

Keyword: Iran, Iran Sanctions

## Online tools: connect with your elected representatives

Using an easy to use third party application the ICC has been able to provide an online tool for Iranian Canadians to easily find their representative and connect with them about some of the priority issues of our community.




**Email your Senators**

**Email your Senators and ask them to reject bill S-219: the Non-Nuclear Sanctions Against Iran Act.**

Use this simple and convenient tool to email your local Senators based on your postal code and use the template below (or draft your own message) to send an email to them. Whenever you receive a response from your local representatives, please send it to our team at [info@iccongress.ca](mailto:info@iccongress.ca) since we are ...

Find your local rep

Compose your email Email Tips 

Subject:

## Simorgh Gala

The ICC successfully hosted the first annual Simorgh Gala in Dec 2016:

- To highlight and celebrate the contributions of our community to Canada's multicultural society, and
- To promote unity in the Iranian Canadian community specially among activists and community influencers.

400 guests including politicians and elected officials from the three major Canadian political parties and all levels of government participated in this prestigious gala.

Image Building + Community Building



## Simorgh Achievement Awards

To encourage the culture of volunteerism and community work, as part of the Simorgh Gala we recognized 7 community leaders and activists who have dedicated their lives to build a stronger Iranian Canadian community.



## Introducing our culture to Canadian politicians

- 338 Members of Parliament and 101 Senators received Nowruz greeting cards from the Iranian Canadian Congress.
- Included an intro to Nowruz and its traditions in each greeting card.



## E-petition 553: Iran-Canada relations

***Part of the petition: We call upon the Government of Canada to re-establish diplomatic relations with Iran, including re-opening embassies in both countries, as a matter of utmost importance.***

- Petition 553 initiated by the ICC was the first formal electronic petition to the House of Commons from the Iranian Canadian community;
- With nearly 16,000 signatures this petition has become one of the major collective civic actions in the history of the Iranian Canadian community.
- This official document has become a major reference for supporters of diplomacy and reengagement with Iran. Major media outlets in Canada and elected officials have referred to this petition in their comments about Canada-Iran relations.

**Nearly 16,000 signatures from across Canada for diplomacy with Iran.**

## ICC mobilized thousands of pro-diplomacy and pro-engagement Iranian-Canadians

- ICC was able to reach out to Iranian Canadians across Canada and organically engage hundreds of advocates to mobilize thousands of signatures in their local areas.
- When closed and certified in January, petition e-553 was among the top petitions submitted to the House of Commons in terms of number of signatures.

Open for signature : September 7, 2016, at 1:39 p.m. (EDT)  
Closed for signature : January 5, 2017, at 1:39 p.m. (EDT)

 Signatures (15781) 

Province / Territory	Signatures
Alberta	1250
British Columbia	2806
Manitoba	168
New Brunswick	66
Newfoundland and Labrador	89
Northwest Territories	11
Nova Scotia	175
Nunavut	2
Ontario	7985
Prince Edward Island	18
Quebec	2655
Saskatchewan	138
Yukon	5
Other Countries	413

## ICC against Trump's travel ban

- ICC was one of the major organizations speaking against this discriminatory order in Canadian media and in contact with Canadian elected officials.
- Our message: Canadian elected officials shall denounce the discriminatory order, Canadian government must ensure that Canadian citizens are not discriminated against at the US-Canada border.
- 6 interviews in 48 hours with major Canadian media outlets.
- Coverage of interviews and statements in over 20 Canadian national and local media outlets.
- Established immediate contact with government officials and arranged a channel of communication to resolve any individual cases impacted.
- Over 600 emails from ICC supporters to MPs across Canada in 48 hours.
- ICC representatives met with Members of Parliament in Ottawa immediately.

**We learned from our campaigns and developed processes and protocols for issues that require rapid response from the ICC.**

## S-219: The Non Nuclear Sanctions Against Iran Act.

- ICC was first to find out about Senator Tkachuk's bill proposing non-nuclear sanctions against Iran.
- Overall bill S-219 expands and strengthens Canada's existing SEMA sanctions on Iran.
- It will block the path of re-engagement between Canada and Iran.
- ICC's position regarding the implications of the bill on possibility of reengagement between Canada and Iran was confirmed by Global Affairs Canada in a formal statement.
- S-219 continues the policies of withdrawal and isolation implemented by former PM Harper. It is now proven that his failed policies with Iran have achieved no positive results for Canada and/or for the people of Iran.

**ICC has so far mobilized over 1,200 emails and hundreds of phone calls from community members to Canadian Senators against Bill S-219.**

## S-219: The Non Nuclear Sanctions Against Iran Act.



- ICC launched a campaign against Bill S-219. For the first time Iranian Canadians were mobilized by the ICC to take part in a legislative process that will have significant implications for them.
- ICC representatives convinced the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee to listen to their arguments opposing Bill S-219. Feb 9, 2017 Bijan Ahmadi and Pouyan Tabasinejad presented ICC's position against S-219 in front of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.
- We encouraged and arranged other expert testimonies from Canadian experts against sanctions on Iran.
- ICC convinced some of the members of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee to actively stand against the bill.
- Senator Wu delivered a strong speech against S-219 at the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee and referred to major points discussed by the ICC in opposition to the proposed bill.
- Because of the efforts of the ICC and hundreds of our community members who took action on this issue the bill is facing strong opposition in the Senate. The bill is expected to go for a final vote in the coming weeks. We will try our best to defeat the bill in the Senate. And if needed we will continue the campaign to defeat the bill in the House of Commons.

**ICC representatives strongly defended the position of the organization against sanctions on Iran in front of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.**

## Honest Reporting



***ICC launched an initiative to monitor and respond to media reports/articles that contain defamatory or false info related to Iran and Iranian-Canadians. Here is a list of some of the responses ICC prepared in recent months:***

- Defamatory op-ed in Vancouver Sun about Iranian Canadians, Jan 8'17
- ICC to Toronto Sun: Discriminatory and Irresponsible Piece by Candice Malcolm, March 17'17
- ICC to the Gatestone Institute: Defamatory and discriminatory article regarding Iranian Canadians by Rafizadeh, May 2'17
- ICC's Response to CIJNews & Shabnam Assadollahi's Defamatory Piece, May 9'17
- The ICC Responds to Michael Petrou's Opinion Piece on CBC, May 25'17

**ICC keeps media accountable for their reports and articles about Iranian-Canadians and Iran.**

## Raising awareness about the priority policies of the Iranian Canadian Congress



- For the first time the ICC held a press conference at the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Ottawa (Sept, 2016).
- ICC executives participated in several interviews with major Canadian media outlets on Iranian-Canadian related issues. Some of the media outlets we did interviews with in the last 12 months: CTV News, Global, CBC, Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, Macleans, Radio Canada, Canadian Press,...
- ICC policy experts and advisors published opinion pieces for Canadian media outlets about Canada's Iran policy.

**ICC has been referenced and/or mentioned around 100 times by Canadian media outlets during the past 12 months about issues related to Iranian-Canadians.**

## Advocating for Iranian-Canadians in media



## Connecting with and informing elected officials about our priorities



***During the last 12 months the ICC has been in regular contact with elected representatives and government officials at all levels of government (from all Canadian political parties) to educate and inform them about the organization's priority policies.***

- We have met with: Minister of Foreign Affairs (Minister Dion and Minister Freeland), Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, NDP Foreign Affairs Critic, Leader of Green Party of Canada, Members of Parliament, Members of Senate, Ontario MPPs.

## Keeping elected officials accountable



***We monitor what our politicians and elected officials say about Iranian Canadians, Iran and issues important to our community. When needed, we respond and react:***

- ICC reacted to disrespectful comments by Senator Andre Pratte during proceedings of the Senate about Iranian Canadians. In response to ICC's objection Senator Pratte apologized to those offended by his comments (October 2016).
- ICC responded to Conservative Interim Leader Rona Ambrose who asked the government to impose sanctions against Iran during the Question Period at the House of Commons. ICC called on its supporters to contact Rona Ambrose to tell her that they are against sanctions on Iran. In a week over 630 people from different cities across Canada emailed Ms. Ambrose through ICC's campaign.
- ICC reacted to comments made by Tory leadership candidates who commented against Canada-Iran relations during their debate in Vancouver. ICC wrote a letter to all Candidates to inform them about the importance of reestablishing relations between Canada and Iran. ICC Policy Chair wrote an op-ed regarding their comments in Huffington Post titled: "Tory Leadership Hopefuls Should Drop Harper's Divisive Iran Rhetoric".

# Challenges + Improvement Opportunities



## Building the organization

- We need to focus on building the organization's fundraising capability. ICC needs access to financial resources (mainly from donations) to be able to take the next steps and grow the organization.
- ICC needs administrative resources to reduce the burden of administrative work on directors, executives and volunteers.
- ICC members need to collectively come up with a solution to deal with the destructive activities of few individuals who have been trying to sabotage the work of the organization, and interfere with the legitimate work of the Board of Directors.

## Advancing our community

- We need to encourage our community to get involved with all Canadian political parties.
- We need to promote unity in our community.
- We need to encourage the culture of volunteerism in our community.
- We need to appreciate all volunteers who are working for the betterment of our community even if we do not agree with their point of view.

# Get Involved



**Join our team.**



**Sign up as a member/supporter.**



**Donate to ICC.**



## Empowerment through unity!

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