



September 21, 2022

Via email: Melanie.Joly@international.gc.ca; minister-ministre@swc-cfc.gc.ca

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, PC, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

The Honourable Marci Ien, PC, MP
Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth
22 Eddy St 10th Flr
Gatineau, QC J8X 2V6

Dear Ministers Joly and Ien,

Re: Urgent action on 2SLGBTQI+ activists sentenced to death in Iran

I am writing to share the Canadian Bar Association's (CBA) concerns over reports that two 2SLGBTQI+ activists have been sentenced to death in Iran. While uncertainty remains over the cause of the sentences, the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights reported on September 6, 2022, that a court in Urmia found Zahra Seddiqi Hamedani, 31, and Elham Choubdar, 24, guilty of "corruption on Earth" for promoting homosexuality and Christianity, as well as communicating with media opposed to the Islamic Republic. It is also the first reported sentencing a gender non-conforming / female person, signaling an expansion of the Iranian state's anti-2SLGBTQI+ animus.

The CBA is a national organization representing approximately 37,000 jurists, including lawyers, notaries, law teachers and students, across Canada. Our primary objectives are to uphold the Rule of Law, improve the administration of justice, and promote equality in the law. In furtherance of these objectives, the CBA previously joined voices with others in the international community in disapproval of the use of capital punishment by the Islamic Republic of Iran against juvenile offenders¹, and in disapproval of anti-homosexual propaganda.²

Canadian values of tolerance, diversity, compassion and mercy are inconsistent with the practice and rationale for capital punishment, and in particular executions based on the sexual orientation or gender expression of an offender. Canada has the resources, political will and public consciousness to meaningfully advance 2SLGBTQI+ rights, and we ask you to take appropriate action on this matter without delay.

Yours truly,

(original letter signed by Steeves Bujold)

Steeves Bujold, he/him-il/lui

¹ [CBA Resolution 05-10-A.](#)

² [CBA Resolution 12-02-A.](#)