



# STATEMENT

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## Conservatives condemn the charges facing Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ottawa, ON** – The Honourable Michael Chong, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement on the Iranian regime’s charges against Iranian musician Toomaj Salehi:

“Conservatives condemn the Iranian regime’s charges against rapper and political activist Toomaj Salehi. The charges are unwarranted and are proof of the regime’s willingness to suppress freedom of expression and human rights.

“Mr. Salehi spoke with CBC News during the Iranian protest movement last year following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who died in police custody after being arrested for not wearing her hijab properly. For this, he has been charged with “colluding with a hostile foreign government”.

“Mr. Salehi is also facing other charges, including spreading “corruption on earth”, which could lead to the death penalty, simply for criticizing the Iranian government through music. He has been imprisoned for approximately eight months.

“The torture and death of Montrealer Zahra Kazemi, execution of wrestler Navid Afkari, imprisonment of lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, shooting down of the Ukrainian International Airlines Flight 752 that killed dozens of Canadians, murder of Mahsa Amini, and Toomaj Salehi’s imprisonment, are a pattern of a regime that has no respect for its own citizens or those of other countries.

“We call on the Iranian regime to drop the charges against Mr. Salehi. We also call on the Trudeau government to condemn these charges, particularly because he is being charged simply for talking to a Canadian broadcaster.

“Global Affairs Canada has stated that Iran's Revolutionary Courts are closely linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which was responsible for the downing of Flight 752. We reiterate our call on the Trudeau government to list the IRGC as a

terrorist organization, as the House of Commons called for in a motion adopted in June 2018, a motion that Prime Minister Trudeau voted for.”