



## MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

### **Standing in Solidarity with Iranian-Canadian – Declaring Persian Heritage Month at the City of Toronto**

**Moved by:** Councillor Lily Cheng

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**Seconded by:** Mayor Olivia Chow

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#### **SUMMARY:**

Toronto recently witnessed one of the largest public demonstrations in its history, with more than 350,000 people gathering in the Willowdale neighbourhood to express solidarity with the people of Iran and to call for freedom, democracy, and human dignity.

This and several other protests in Toronto emphasize the strong and longstanding connections between Toronto and its Iranian community. Many members of this community have close personal ties to those affected by ongoing violence and unrest in Iran, resulting in heightened anxiety, grief, and uncertainty for families in Toronto. Continued internet shutdowns have only deepened this distress, as many wait for updates from loved ones.

The loss of life during recent protests, combined with an increasingly volatile situation, has deeply affected not only the Iranian community but many Torontonians who share a commitment to human rights, peace, and dignity. This is a particularly sensitive and challenging time for Toronto's Iranian diaspora, and there is a strong desire for the City to demonstrate solidarity in a meaningful, respectful, and lasting way.

At the same time, the Province of Ontario formally recognizes March as Persian Heritage Month, an important opportunity to celebrate the rich history, culture, and contributions of Iranian-Canadians, and to acknowledge the community's resilience and strength in times of hardship.

#### **Reason for Urgency:**

This motion is urgent as it aligns with March, recognized by the Province of Ontario as Persian Heritage Month, and provides a timely opportunity for the City to acknowledge and support the community.

At the same time, Toronto's Iranian community continues to experience ongoing distress due to current events in Iran, and there is a strong need for immediate and visible support from the City.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That City Council formally recognize March as Persian Heritage Month in the City of Toronto, and encourage the celebration of Persian and Iranian culture, history, and contributions, while also affirming solidarity with the Iranian community during this critical time.
2. That City Council direct the Chief of Protocol to illuminate the Toronto sign in Nathan Phillips Square in green, white, and red as an expression of solidarity with the Iranian community, recognizing their pursuit of freedom, democracy, and human dignity in Iran, and to honour the lives lost in this pursuit.

March 25-27, 2026