

The Mayor Olivia Chow
Toronto City Hall – 2nd floor
100 Queen Street West, Toronto ON
CC: Members of Council

February 9, 2026

Dear Mayor Chow,

Re: Lion and Sun Flag Raising in Toronto

I am writing on behalf of the International Center for Human Rights in Canada (ICHR) to respectfully request your support for a flag-raising ceremony featuring the historic Lion and Sun flag at Toronto City Hall.

In June 2025, I submitted a formal application on behalf of ICHR and the community for this purpose, which was unfortunately not approved. A subsequent application submitted in January 2026 was also declined. While we respect the City's processes, we remain hopeful that this request may be reconsidered in light of its cultural significance and current circumstances.

The Lion and Sun flag represents unity, cultural heritage, history, and shared identity for millions of Iranians worldwide. For Iranian Canadians, it is not merely a political symbol, but a deeply rooted cultural emblem reflecting centuries of art, literature, and tradition. It is consistently displayed at community, cultural, and social events across the Greater Toronto Area.

Recently, more than 150,000 people participated in a march in Toronto from Dundas Square, where participants carried the Lion and Sun flag rather than the flag of the Islamic Republic. This clearly demonstrated which symbol represents the community's collective identity.

Several neighboring municipalities, including Aurora, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan, have approved and hosted official Lion and Sun flag-raising ceremonies in recent days. We respectfully submit that Toronto, as Canada's largest and most diverse city, is well positioned to offer similar recognition and to reconsider this request.

In addition, we respectfully request that the City of Toronto and the Mayor consider inviting Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi to attend the flag-raising ceremony, should this initiative be approved.

Iranian Canadians have made meaningful contributions to Toronto and the GTA in business, education, healthcare, culture, and public life. As an active and engaged community, we value Toronto's longstanding commitment to diversity, inclusion, and respect for heritage communities.

Given the ongoing situation in Iran and its profound emotional, social, and psychological impact on Iranian Canadians, the opportunity to raise this flag at City Hall would serve as a powerful gesture of solidarity, support, and recognition. It would also reflect the City's commitment to human rights and democratic values.

Our organization remains fully committed to working collaboratively with City staff to ensure that any event aligns with municipal policies and protocols. For your reference, we have attached the previously rejected decisions of the City, and we submitted our third application today.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further at your convenience.

Respectfully,



Ardeshir Zarezadeh

President,
The International Center for Human Rights
Promoting human rights and peace in Iran, West Asia, and around the world
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Enclosure: Lion and Sun Flag
Previous Applications
New application submitted

CC: Members of Council





Protocol
To: ICHR >

2026-01-15

Flag Raising Request

Hello Ardeshir,

Thank you for submitting a flag raising request. We have reviewed your flag raising request and have determined that it does not meet the City of Toronto's Flag Raising Program criteria.

Criteria can be found at [About Flag Raising and How to Request a Flag Raising](#).

Thank you,

Strategic Protocol & External Relations
City Clerk's Office
City of Toronto



Protocol

2025-06-17

To: info@humanrightsintl.com >

Flag Raising Request - Does Not Meet Criteria

Hello Ardeshir,


Thank you for submitting a flag raising request. We have reviewed your request and determined it does not meet the City of Toronto's Flag Raising Program criteria.



To learn more about the City of Toronto's Flag Raising Program criteria please see [About Flag Raising and How to Request a Flag Raising](#).


Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,


Strategic Protocol & External Relations



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/ [Flag-Raising & Half-Masting](#) / Flag Raising Request Form

Translate 

Flag Raising Request Form Submitted

Thank you.

Your request has been successfully submitted.

Your Reference SPER-27250

Number is: A staff member from the Strategic Protocol & External Relations Team will contact you once the request has been reviewed.

[Begin a New Flag Raising Request](#)