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# Ontario Says "No" to Ideology of Hate

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This week marked an important turning point in Ontario's awareness of determined and well-funded efforts to undermine the values and conceptual underpinnings of Canadian society by groups hoping to import a toxic and foreign ideology to our nation.

Nowhere was this effort more evident than the staging of the "Al Quds Day" rally, held for the past two years on the grounds of Queen's Park. Al Quds Day was proclaimed on the last Friday of the month of Ramadan in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran to spread the demonization of western values of freedom and democracy around the world.

In past rallies, participants carried Hezbollah flags, flaunted pictures of despotic Iranian leaders and promoted anti-Semitism by referring to Israel as a "cancer." Chants of "Death to Israel and Death to America" are typical features of Al Quds celebrations. Iran's new "moderate" president-elect, Hasan Rouhani, today reiterated the same genocidal phrases as his predecessor when [he noted](#), "The Zionist regime has been a wound on the body of the Islamic world for years and the wound should be removed."

Hundreds of protesters had planned to gather this Saturday on the grounds of the Ontario legislature, the heart of our provincial democracy, to support a regime that stones women to death, hangs homosexuals, funds the ongoing slaughter of thousands of Syrian civilians and exports terror around the world. From failed terror plots in such disparate locations as Azerbaijan, Thailand and Cyprus, to tragically successful bombings which killed and maimed scores of innocent people in countries including Bulgaria and Argentina, Iran is working to further its influence and

ideology through terror. Chillingly, it is gaining support for these goals through Al Quds Day rallies, now held annually around the globe.

It is not only Jewish communities and Israelis -- threatened repeatedly with annihilation by Iran -- who are alarmed by the subversion of our democracy and the staging of this annual pro-Shariah rally. A large percentage of the ex-patriot Persian community -- men and women who escaped the atrocities of the Iranian government and now find themselves battling the same hatred and intolerance they sought to escape -- are similarly troubled.

I have always believed it is morally wrong to sanction a rally in support of a demagogue and an ideology that is diametrically at odds with the basic Canadian values of freedom and democracy. Ontario is a free society, and its citizens have a right to march, to speak, and to protest freely.

However, supporters of a genocidal theocracy which aims to fundamentally reshape western democracies by exporting the values of Shariah law should not and do not have to receive the blessing of the state to exercise this right. The fundamental values cherished by all Canadians must not be discarded so cavalierly, with the acquiescence of our government and the permission of our laws.

Ironically, it is this very same right to freedom of speech which is denied to millions of Iranian men and women persecuted by their own government; it is the right to think and speak freely which led so many Iranians to come to Canada, and the fear of losing these precious rights through the negligent support of this rally, and all it stands for, which causes such great alarm.

In the words of Marina Nemat, an Iranian-Canadian author who has written and spoken extensively about her imprisonment and torture in Iran's Evin prison by the [Khomeini regime at the age of 16](#), "Freedom is like water in the palms of your hands; take your eyes off it, even for a little while, and it drips through your fingers, leaving nothing but thirst."

And so it was a welcome surprise to learn that Ontario's Sergeant-at-Arms [has refused permission](#) for organizers to hold the Al Quds Day rally at Queen's Park tomorrow. It seems discussions I had last year with the Sergeant-at-Arms, as well as meetings he held with other leaders in both the Jewish and Iranian communities, have forced government officials to pay attention to this treasonous event happening in their own front yard.

As the Iranian foreign ministry condemns the fledgling peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians, and alarm grows in Washington about the increasing influence of Iran in Latin American countries such as Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela, I am proud to see that our government, and the individuals elected to protect the

fundamental and indispensable principles upon which our province and our nation are based, finally have their eyes on a truly essential matter.