

## Aurora raises 'true flag of Iranian people' at Town Hall rally



The 'true flag of Iran, the flag of the Iranian people' was raised at Town Hall on Wednesday afternoon during a rally held in solidarity with the people of Iran.

The rally, which was hosted by Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, and Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas, filled the forecourt of Town Hall where Parsa presented Mayor and Council with the flag in question.

'Friends, Iran is one of the world's oldest civilizations, shaped and sustained for thousands of years by strength, resilience and perseverance of the Iranian people,' said MPP Parsa. 'In recent weeks, the brave people of Iran have once again shown the world their determination, their resolve by raising the true flag of Iran, the flag of the Iranian people, in Iran as a powerful expression of identity, resistance, and hope - a flag that belongs to them, a flag that has endured alongside generations who refuse to lose their identity in the face of repression.

'It is a symbol of a people who will not be silenced and who will continue to stand up for freedom despite unimaginable costs.'

The lion and sun depicted on the flag, he said, 'represent the Iranian people's call for freedom and regime change; a call that in recent weeks has been met with brutal violence.'

'Over 37,500 innocent people, which we know is a lot more than that, have been murdered by this regime and more than 330,000 people have been injured in the hands of this vile regime, simply for demanding their fundamental human rights,' Parsa continued. 'The flag carries centuries of meaning. Its green, white and red reflect hope, peace and strength, and its centre, the lion and sun, stands as an enduring symbol of a proud civilization shaped by its history, by its culture and its remarkable resilience.

'Friends, neighbors, colleagues, let me be clear: The terrorist regime in Iran does not represent the people of Iran. And it must be held accountable for acts of genocide and crimes against humanity. The true representatives of Iran are its people, fearless, courageous in their pursuit of freedom.'

Amid the sea of residents waving the flag, holding signs of solidarity and more, support was shown by municipal representatives, including Mayor Mrakas, and Councillors Ron Weese, Rachel Gilliland, Michael Thompson, John Gallo, and Harold Kim.

Local leaders coming together to raise the flag, said Parsa, was a moment of 'unity [and a] reminder that light will always prevail over darkness, no matter our background, our religion, creed, or beliefs, as we share the conviction that people deserve freedom, justice, and a future shaped by their own will.'

In turn, Mayor Mrakas praised Parsa as 'being the voice that he is for the Iranian people here in Canada.'

?Today we stand unequivocally with the Iranian people. Aurora is a Town that believes in freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and freedom from fear and oppression,? said Mayor Mrakas. ?These are not abstract ideals. They are fundamental human rights. For far too long, the Iranian people have lived under a terrorist regime that rules through violence, intimidation, censorship, imprisonment and fear. A regime that silences women, punishes dissent and brutally suppresses those who dare to stand up for their basic human rights. What the Iranian people are facing is not a difference of opinion. It is a systemic repression carried out by a regime that uses terror to maintain control.

?I want all of you to know that we see you, we hear you and in Aurora we stand with you, the Iranian people. Today, we will raise the Lion and Sun flag here, the true flag of the Iranian people here at Aurora Town Hall. We raise it as a symbol of Iran's true history, identity and pride. Separate from the regime that seeks to erase it, this flag will not fly as an act of politics, but as an act of solidarity. Not as a gesture, but as a statement of principle. Aurora will always be a place where people can gather peacefully, speak freely and stand up for the community without fear. As we raise the Lion and Sun flag here at Town Hall today, let us send a message that Aurora stands with the Iranian people today and always.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter