

Concordia Student Union- Council of Representatives
Special Council Meeting
Thursday January 15th, 2026
Zoom, 18h00

1. Call to Order

Chairperson calls the meeting to order at 18h05.

We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters we gather today. TiohEá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

2. Ratification of the agenda

Liora Hechel (Councillor) asks for reasoning on the cancelled January 7th RCM. Chairperson explains that they did not receive any motions or reports for the meeting and that the agenda for the January 7th was empty. Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) explains that the deadline for submitting the executive reports for December was during the time that Executives were on break, which is why it was missed.

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) motions to ratify the agenda. Anastasia Zorchinsky (Councillor) seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

3. New Business- Substantive

- a. Motion to Condemn Systemic Oppression by the Iranian Regime and its Clerical Leadership

WHEREAS the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to systematically violate fundamental human rights, including freedoms of expression, religion, gender equality, bodily autonomy, academic freedom and peaceful assembly;

WHEREAS the clerical leadership of the Iranian regime has overseen ongoing acts of state violence, arbitrary imprisonment, and execution of

dissidents, women, labour organizers, ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals;

WHEREAS the CSU “opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression” and stands in solidarity with LGBTQIA2S+ people (Positions 11.1–11.2), and Iran criminalizes and violently represses queer and trans individuals;

WHEREAS the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) functions as the primary instrument of internal repression, enforcing authoritarian rule through surveillance, censorship, militarization of civilian life, and violent crackdowns on democratic movements such as Zan, Zendegi, Azadi (“Woman, Life, Freedom”)

WHEREAS the CSU recognizes that “women and gender non-conforming people experience barriers based upon class, ability, race, gender expression, religion, and ethnicity” (Position 6.1), and the Iranian regime’s gender-apartheid policies directly violate these principles;

WHEREAS Iranian workers’, students’, women’s rights groups, and ethnic communities (including Kurdish, Baloch, and Arab populations) have faced increased repression for advocating justice, equality, and self-determination;

WHEREAS the CSU “opposes racism in all forms and rejects all values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism” (Position 5.1), and the Iranian state’s persecution of ethnic minorities - including Kurdish, Baloch, and Arab communities - constitutes precisely the form of systemic racism the CSU is mandated to oppose;

WHEREAS the IRGC funds the same systemic oppression throughout the world and acts as a destabilizing force in the Middle East;

WHEREAS solidarity with grassroots human-rights struggles is consistent with the Concordia Student Union’s long-standing commitments to anti-oppression, anti-imperialism, decolonization, and global justice;

WHEREAS many Iranian, Middle Eastern, and international students at Concordia have been personally affected by state violence and have called for recognition of the Iranian regime’s ongoing abuses;

WHEREAS the CSU “actively works to dismantle racist systems, policies, and practices, locally and globally” (Position 5.2), and the Iranian regime’s racialized state violence aligns with the structures the CSU is committed to opposing;

WHEREAS according to the most recent publicly available survey conducted by Concordia University, over 14% of visa students are Iranian, making them an underrepresented minority and the second-largest group of international students at Concordia;

WHEREAS a significant proportion of Concordia students are personally affected by the IRGC’s repression;

WHEREAS Iranian and Iranian-diaspora students at Concordia are experiencing heightened fear, grief, and psychological distress as a direct result of the IRGC’s ongoing violence, repression, and persecution of civilians, protesters, students, and dissidents in Iran;

WHEREAS the CSU “condemns anti-immigrant rhetoric” and calls on the community to “welcome migrants (undocumented and otherwise) seeking refuge” (Position 10.2), and Iranian diaspora students at Concordia often face intimidation, surveillance, and threats from the Iranian state and its proxies;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Concordia Student Union unequivocally condemn the Islamic Republic of Iran as an authoritarian, clerical-militarized regime responsible for systematic violence, gender-based oppression, and the suppression of democratic, student-led, and grassroots liberation movements;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CSU explicitly denounce the IRGC as a central arm of state repression, responsible for widespread violations including enforced disappearances, torture, the violent crushing of the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising, and the maintenance of what international human-rights researchers have described as a gender-apartheid system;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CSU, in collaboration with the External Affairs portfolio, the Mobilization efforts, and the Campaigns

Department, condemn the political persecution of dissidents and others who are denied proper trials, the right to be heard, and the ability to defend themselves under the IRGC's repressive practices;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CSU reaffirm its solidarity with all individuals resisting the Iranian regime's violent authoritarianism - including women, students, labour organizers, ethnic minorities, queer communities, political prisoners, and all relevant stakeholders targeted by state-sanctioned brutality;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CSU publicly commit to opposing the Iranian regime's efforts to silence, intimidate, or surveil diaspora communities, and all other relevant stakeholders in Montreal, and condemn any attempts by the Iranian state or IRGC-aligned entities to export their repression beyond Iran's borders;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the External Affairs portfolio including the campaigns department be mandated to collaborate with ~~Persian~~ Iranian students, feminist organizations, and human-rights groups to raise awareness of the Iranian regime's ongoing abuses, including its violent suppression of civil society, its use of gender-based repression, and its criminalization of dissent;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all CSU international-solidarity programming explicitly include recognition of the Iranian people's struggle against clerical authoritarianism, militarized state violence, and gender oppression, and clearly uplift the voices of those fighting for freedom, dignity, and democratic liberation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CSU publicly support the Woman, Life, Freedom movement and all other pro-democracy, anti-authoritarian, anti-patriarchal struggles against the Iranian state's violent rule through both the regime, and its proxies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED all elements of this motion arise directly from, and remain fully consistent with, the CSU's democratically adopted Positions - including anti-racism, intersectional feminism, LGBTQIA2S+ solidarity, migrant justice, worker solidarity, and global anti-oppression commitments - and therefore do not constitute the creation of a new Position but the application of existing ones;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED understanding the sensitivity constantly developing nature of the current situation in Iran, the CSU immediately issue a statement in support of the resistance and overt acts of anti-oppression taking place against the regime in Iran right now, provide support to ~~Persian~~ Iranian students on campus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Concordia Student Union direct the removal of the CSU social media statement published on January 14th by January 16th at 12pm, and actively include Iranian students on the Jan 15th SCM in the writing process and the statement sent by the student presenter to replace it with a different statement, in order to ensure consistency, accuracy and accountability in the CSU's public communications.

Anastasia Zorchinsky (Councillor) motions to Condemn Systemic Oppression by the Iranian Regime and Its Clerical Leadership. Sarah Aspler (Councillor) seconds.

Member of general public explains context and reasoning for the importance of the motion, including the human rights abuses committed by the Iranian regime.

Nathanael McCooeye (Councillor) asks if by taking an official stance the CSU would be subjecting Iranian students to any risks. Member of general public explains that the motion would not put Iranian students in danger, and that it would help Iranian students psychologically and emotionally.

Ryan Assaker (Finance Coordinator) questions if the label "Persian students" in the motion is an accurate description for the Iranian diaspora and asks for a friendly amendment to change the label to "Iranian students". Ryan Assaker explains that the statistic of Iranians being 14% of the student population is inaccurate, as they are instead 14% of the international student body. A member of general public shares that Persian and Iranian are used interchangeably.

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) invites member of general public who sponsored the motion to join the next External Committee meeting. Danna Ballantyne shares plans to propose a

financial grant for Iranian students and an international women's day event.

Anastasia Zorchinsky (Councillor) accepts the friendly amendment to change the word Persian to Iranian in the motion.

Liora Hechel (Councillor) requests for the author of the motion could be featured in the next CSU newsletter.

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) asks for elaboration on "IRGC-aligned entities." Member of general public clarifies that the IRGC-aligned entities refers to their intelligence services and their proxies.

Member of general public asks to read aloud their campaign statement that accompanies the motion. Chairperson clarifies that they only have a minute left of their final speaking turn and suggests that they put the statement in the Zoom chat. Member of general public asks that when the motion passes, the campaign statement should be automatically posted.

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) clarifies that this would violate section 3 of the CSU's Policy on positions, which outlines the procedure for posting statements.

The following statement was presented in the public meeting chat:

**Standing With the Iranian People Against Theocratic Authoritarianism,
Mass State Violence, and Gender Apartheid**

The Concordia Student Union (CSU) affirms its solidarity with the people of Iran who are resisting a theocratic authoritarian regime built on clerical rule, militarized repression, and systemic violence. This campaign is grounded in the lived realities of Iranian and Iranian-diaspora students at Concordia, and in the CSU's long-standing commitments to anti-oppression, intersectional feminism, migrant justice, worker solidarity, and global justice. The Islamic Republic of Iran is not a neutral state experiencing unrest. It is a theocratic system of governance in which unelected clerical authorities wield ultimate power over the judiciary, security forces, and civil life. This structure enables repression not as an exception, but as a

method of rule. The violence we are witnessing today is not a breakdown of order — it is the enforcement of it.

Why This Campaign Is Urgent Now

Over the past several years — and with renewed intensity following the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising — Iran has experienced nationwide protests led by women, students, workers, and marginalized communities. These protests were not isolated or elite-driven. They erupted across cities, universities, workplaces, and neighborhoods, involving millions of ordinary people demanding dignity, bodily autonomy, and an end to authoritarian rule.

The state's response has been catastrophic.

Security forces have opened fire on civilians. Thousands have been killed. Tens of thousands have been arrested. Protesters have been tortured, disappeared, and executed following sham trials. Families have been denied information about the fate of their loved ones. Entire regions have been placed under siege.

Alongside physical violence, the regime has repeatedly imposed near-total internet shutdowns, deliberately cutting off communication to prevent organizing, suppress evidence, and isolate civilians from the outside world. These shutdowns are not technical failures. They are strategic tools of repression designed to allow killing to occur without witnesses.

For Iranian students at Concordia, these moments have been marked by silence from home, unanswered messages, and the constant fear that the next piece of news will be irreversible.

Concordia Students Are Directly Affected

According to publicly available university data, over 14% of Concordia students are Iranian, making them the second-largest international student group and an underrepresented minority on campus. Many have parents, siblings, and close relatives living in Iran who have experienced arrests, interrogations, job loss, or direct violence.

During internet shutdowns, students have gone days or weeks without knowing whether their families are alive. During mass executions, students have watched names circulate online, unsure if the next announcement will include someone they love. This level of sustained fear and grief does not stop at the border. It enters classrooms, exams, and everyday student life. A student union that claims to prioritize mental health, equity, and safety cannot ignore trauma produced by mass state

violence — especially when that violence so clearly affects its own members.

The Theocratic Nature of the Iranian Regime

Iran's system of governance is explicitly theocratic. Ultimate authority rests not with elected representatives, but with clerical institutions that derive legitimacy from religious interpretation rather than democratic consent.

The Supreme Leader and Guardian Council override electoral outcomes, control the judiciary, and shape security policy.

This matters because repression is not merely political; it is ideological and religiously enforced. Laws governing women's bodies, speech, sexuality, and belief are justified through state-sanctioned theology and enforced through violence. Dissent is framed not only as political opposition, but as moral corruption or heresy.

Opposing this system is not an attack on Islam. It is a rejection of clerical authoritarianism that instrumentalizes religion to justify domination and violence. Many of the people resisting this system — and many of those being killed — are Muslims themselves.

Gender Apartheid and the Catalyst for Protest

Women have been at the forefront of resistance because they bear the brunt of the regime's control. Compulsory hijab laws, morality policing, unequal family law, and exclusion from public life are enforced through arrest, beating, imprisonment, and economic punishment.

The death of Mahsa (Jina) Amini in custody was not an isolated tragedy. It was the visible rupture of a system that had long treated women's bodies as state property. The Woman, Life, Freedom movement emerged as a direct response to gender apartheid — a system in which gender segregation and subordination are codified and violently enforced.

The state responded by escalating violence, killing women and girls, arresting schoolchildren, and criminalizing mourning itself.

Criminalization of Dissent, Workers, and Students

The Iranian regime does not distinguish between peaceful protest and violent crime. Students protesting on campuses, workers striking for unpaid wages, teachers demanding dignity, and families mourning the dead are all treated as security threats.

Universities have been militarized. Students have been beaten, arrested, expelled, and banned from continuing their education. Labor organizers

have been imprisoned and executed. Entire ethnic regions have been collectively punished for resisting.

Kurdish, Baloch, and Arab communities have faced especially brutal repression, including disproportionate killings and executions. This pattern constitutes systemic racism, not incidental discrimination.

The Role of the IRGC in Mass Repression

At the center of this violence is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which functions as a parallel state apparatus. The IRGC controls intelligence, surveillance, censorship, paramilitary forces, and significant economic power. It plays a leading role in coordinating crackdowns, enforcing internet shutdowns, and suppressing protests through lethal force.

The IRGC's actions during recent protests — including live fire against civilians and mass detentions — demonstrate that it operates not as a defensive military, but as an internal repression force.

Condemning the IRGC is not a cultural judgment. It is a necessary political assessment of a security institution responsible for mass human-rights violations.

Rejecting Disinformation and Deflection

This campaign rejects narratives that dismiss Iranian protests as foreign-engineered, caused by sanctions, or motivated by hatred of religion. These claims mirror regime propaganda and function to delegitimize grassroots resistance.

People do not risk execution because of foreign talking points. They protest because their lives have become unlivable.

Criticizing a theocratic state that uses religion to justify violence is not Islamophobia. Conflating the two silences victims, many of whom are Muslim women, workers, and students demanding dignity and freedom.

Diaspora Students and Transnational Repression

Iranian diaspora students face intimidation, surveillance, and threats — often directed at family members still in Iran. Speaking out abroad carries real risk. This creates fear and self-censorship on campus, undermining freedom of expression and student safety.

Supporting these students is a matter of migrant justice and institutional responsibility.

Our Commitment as a Student Union

This campaign does not create new political positions. It applies the CSU's existing commitments to a documented and ongoing human-rights crisis that is directly affecting members of our community.

Anti-oppression requires clarity.

Solidarity requires courage.

Silence, in the face of mass killing and repression, is not neutrality.

The CSU stands with the Iranian people — not with a theocratic regime that governs through fear, censorship, and violence. We stand with those who continue to resist, despite the cost.

A member from the general public explains that their issue regarding the CSU's existing statement on Iran is on slide four of the post in the line "genuine liberation and justice cannot be imposed from outside" as the people of Iran are requesting for the help of military intervention.

Sarah Aspler (Councillor) asks why the IRJC was not mentioned in the CSU's statement. Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) clarifies that the decision was made in an effort to make the information accessible. Danna Ballantyne explains that the CSU Campaigns department will be looking into having materials available at their bi-weekly tabling to explain the IRGC and expresses willingness to amend the caption of the Iran statement post to include the IRGC.

Liora Hechel (Councillor) asks that the full statement be included in the minutes, and that all statements made by the Iranian students be included in the minutes word for word.

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) explains that the best representative statistic they have for the percentage of Concordia students that are Iranian is 2.8% and asks that the statistic in the motion to either be changed to 2.8% or be amended to 13.8% of visa students in order to be factually accurate before the vote.

Anastasia Zorchinsky (Councillor) motions to include the following amendment to the motion:

Be it further resolved that the Concordia Student Union direct the removal of the CSU social media statement published on January 14th by January 16th at 12pm, and actively include Iranian students on the Jan 15th SCM in the writing process and the statement sent by the student presenter to

replace it with a different statement, in order to ensure consistency, accuracy and accountability in the CSU's public communications – and the statement-as well as an explanation of the need for correction raised by Iranian Concordia students – be posted up to 7 days after the January 15th SCM.

Ashely Steinwald (Councillor) seconds.

Ashley Steinwald (Councillor) states that if the CSU is going to release a statement that is incomplete or incorrect, it's the responsibility of the Councillors and Executives to have it removed immediately. Ashely Steinwald explains the importance of listening to voices of the Iranian students present in the call.

Liora Hechel (Councillor) asks why the CSU can't publish the statement quicker. Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) explains that fast-tracking work would be in violation of the collective agreement of the unionized CSU staff.

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) explains the procedural process for statements as per CSU policy and invites Iranian students to join the next External Committee meeting.

Member of general public expresses frustration that a statement for Iran could take up to two weeks to be released, as it is more urgent than any other situation happening in the world.

Executives provide a point of information to the Chairperson via Zoom chat that the two-week timeline discussed was for the creation of a new statement, and that the current statement could be deleted as soon as the next morning.

Ryan Michon (Councillor) suggests friendly amendment to establish the deadline for the statement to be posted up to 7 days following January 15th. Anastasia Zorchinsky (Councillor) accepts the friendly amendment.

Executives and members of general public discuss who should join the working group to create the new statement.

Ryan Michon (Councillor) motions to call the question of the amendment and proceed to a roll call vote once the speakers list has been exhausted.

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) reviews timeline for creating the statement and expresses concern that a week would not be enough time to create a statement that satisfies all parties.

Member of general public asks if the statement presented in the current motion can be posted. Danna Ballantyne explains that it is too long and does not meet CSU's accessibility guidelines.

Member of general public asks for a friendly amendment to add "the CSU adds an explanation to why the previous statement was inaccurate."

Danna Ballantyne (External Affairs and Mobilization Coordinator) asks for clarification as to why the previous statement was inaccurate, as it was written with an Iranian student. Member of general public reiterates that their issue is with slide four. Danna Ballantyne suggests that slide four of the post be removed and the IRGC be named in the caption.

Member of general public doesn't accept the suggestion, and states that their issue is with the entirety of the post.

Roll call vote:

Kinsey El Tanani: Absent

Lina Elbakaye: Abstain

Dave Plant: Abstain

Noah Hunt: Absent

Ashley Steinwald: For

Gabriela Aragon: Abstain

Ali Salman: Absent

Saraluz Barton Gomez: Absent

Maria Chitoroaga: Absent

Anastasia Zorchinsky: For

Chana Leah Natanblut: For

Salma Benani: Absent

Ryan Michon: For

Michael Lecchino: Abstain

Liora Hechel: Abstain

Sarah Wolman: Absent

Diana Levitin: For
Emilie Alexandre: For
Marwan Shalby: Abstain
Nathanael McCooney: For
Jad Harb: Absent
Hani David Baydoun: Absent
Orly Wazana: For
Nadeem El-Charabati: Absent
Coby Toledano: For
Norah Finlay: Absent
Sarah Aspler: For
Alexandrah Cardona: Absent
Lili Daviault Campbell: Abstain

For: 11
Against: 0
Motion passes unanimously.

Chairperson allows Anastasia Zorchinsky to yield their speaking turn to member of general public who exhausted theirs. Chairperson requests that it is recorded in the minutes that this exception will only be allowed once.

Roll Call vote for the motion to Condemn Systemic Oppression by the Iranian Regime and its Clerical Leadership:

Kinsey El Tanani: Absent
Lina Elbakaye: Abstain
Dave Plant: Absent
Noah Hunt: Absent
Ashley Steinwald: For
Gabriela Aragon: Abstain
Ali Salman: Absent
Saraluz Barton Gomez: Absent
Maria Chitoroaga: Absent
Anastasia Zorchinsky: For
Chana Leah Natanblut: For
Salma Benani: Absent
Ryan Michon: For
Michael Lecchino: Abstain

Liora Hechel: For
Sarah Wolman: Absent
Diana Levitin: For
Emilie Alexandre: For
Marwan Shalby: Absent
Nathanael McCooeye: For
Jad Harb: Absent
Hani David Baydoun: Absent
Orly Wazana: For
Nadeem El-Charabati: Absent
Coby Toledano: For
Norah Finlay: Absent
Sarah Aspler: For
Alexandrah Cardona: Absent
Lili Daviault Campbell: Absent

For: 11
Against: 0

Motion passes unanimously.

4. Adjournment

Lina Elbakaye (Councillor) motions to adjourn the meeting. Nathanael McCooeye (Councillor) seconds. Motion is adopted unanimously.

Meeting is adjourned at 21h04.

Council Chairperson



Council Minute Keeper