



January 5, 2023

Honorable Members of the Seattle City Council,

Our organization, the National Iranian American Council (NIAC), commends your desire to pass a resolution standing with the brave people of Iran as they face a brutal crackdown from Iranian authorities. NIAC denounces the ruthless attacks on Iranian people by Iranian authorities. We appreciate the City Council's sentiment and your desire to support the Iranian-American community.

Regrettably, the effort has been undermined by some who are more eager to slander our organization and engage in a damaging disinformation campaign – including by trying to get the U.S. government to repress voices they disagree with – rather than focus on the devastating human rights situation on the ground in Iran. This is why an initial draft of the resolution falsely accused our organization of being a “lobby” of the authoritarian government in Iran and urged an FBI investigation into our work.

While we worked with councilmembers to correct the record, others apparently were working to spread disinformation. As a result, the Saudi-funded propaganda network Iran International published a [report](#) that grossly misconstrued the Council's work on the resolution.

The extensive disinformation and slander targeting our organization is not new, though in recent months it has escalated and includes violent threats towards members of our community, especially Iranian-American women. When similar attacks based on falsehoods and calls for an investigation were made years ago by the likes of Sens. Ted Cruz and Tom Cotton, dozens of progressive organizations and political leaders - including MoveOn, Indivisible and former Washington Lieutenant Governor Cyrus Habib - rallied to our defense in a [public letter](#).

The facts about our organization are clear: we are a people-powered organization with deep connections to the Seattle community and a commitment to peace and human rights — including the right of the Iranian people to self-determination. Like any political organization, we engage in debates that stir the passions of many members of our community, though we always strive to engage in respectful dialogue and support the community's engagement in the civic process. We wish we could say the same about many of our detractors. There will always be a range of perspectives among the Iranian-American community, but there should be no place for slander, disinformation, intimidation and harassment in our discourse.

If the Council moves forward with consideration of Resolution 32078 - which has been postponed until next week - we urge you to focus on the deeply concerning human rights situation on the ground in Iran and avoid distractions or playing into the caustic politics and back-handed games that are being played by bad faith actors.



Our doors are always open to elected officials, particularly those like yourselves who are hoping to do the right thing by standing with the people of Iran and condemning the brutal crackdown. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel Abadi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Samuel" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Abadi".

President, National Iranian American Council