

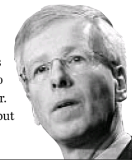
## Liberals prepare ad concepts attacking Harper, Conservative government

The federal Conservatives are preparing to unleash new attack ads on Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, pictured, but this time the Grits could have some ammunition of their own. The Liberals have been developing election campaign themes and political ad concepts and testing them with focus groups for a few weeks. Some of the concepts

### ELECTION CAMPAIGN THEMES

are for negative ads attacking Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative government. The Tories have filmed footage for a new set of attack ads against Mr. Dion, and it was reported this week

the spots will assail the Liberal leader's response to last week's budget. Asked to comment on the next Tory attack ads, Mr. Dion said yesterday he "will fight back, but not in negativity." *CanWest News Service*



# Canada may launch own Kazemi probe

Photojournalist beaten to death in Iran in 2003

BY ALLISON HANES

Canada may launch its own criminal investigation into the role of Tehran's top prosecutor in the rape, torture and murder of Montreal photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who was beaten to death inside Iranian's notorious Evin prison in July 2003.

The subcommittee on international human rights recommended such an initiative last week, which will now go to the standing committee on foreign affairs for approval and could be voted on by all members of parliament in the House of Commons in the coming weeks.

If the probe is launched and enough evidence gathered by the RCMP, Justice Department officials could indict Saeed Mortazavi on murder charges directly, call for his extradition and, if denied, issue an international warrant for his arrest through Interpol — a rare move using provisions of Canadian law to prosecute a crime against one of its citizens on foreign soil.

"We're not there yet, but we're close," said Payam Akhavan, an Iranian-born law professor at McGill University and former war crimes prosecutor who has been part of an international effort to force Iran to hold those responsible for Ms. Kazemi's death to account.

"How much do we have to lose really?" he said. "This is state-sanctioned rape, torture and murder at the highest levels of government and it has been covered up."

"We need to make [Mr. Mortazavi] into the poster child for impunity."

Prof. Akhavan met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper this week in Ottawa to offer his legal opinion on such a strategy.

The meeting was also attended by Nazanin Afshin-Jam, a former Miss World Canada turned advocate for women's rights in Iran, as well as Jason Kenney, chairman of the subcommittee on international human rights.

Canada sought to have Germany arrest Mr. Mortazavi when he showed up unexpectedly at a United Nations human rights gathering in Geneva last summer. His presence drew international scorn.

But Mr. Mortazavi changed his travel plans to avoid passing



Self-portrait of Zahra Kazemi, who was taking pictures of protesters at Iran's Evin prison, where she was arrested and detained.

through Frankfurt and made it safely home.

Prof. Akhavan said Canada can take steps to ensure that doesn't happen next time.

"The criminal code specifically provides for jurisdiction over the crime of torture committed outside Canada if 'the complainant is a Canadian citizen,'" Prof. Akhavan stated in his memorandum to the Prime Minister.

"The United Nations convention against torture also provides that a state party shall take such measures as may be necessary to establish its jurisdiction over the crime of torture when the victim is a national of that state if that state considers it appropriate." The exercise of extra-territorial

jurisdiction to protect Canadian citizens against international crimes is wholly consistent with both Canadian and international law."

Taking aim at Mr. Mortazavi appears to have broad support across party lines.

The Conservative government offered no official comment yesterday, but parliamentary sources told the *National Post* that such a move is the logical next step after the attempt to have him arrested in Germany.

Irwin Cotler, a Liberal member of the subcommittee, said he endorses the indictment and expects it to eventually be approved.

"I do believe there is broad

support for this," he said yesterday. "We need to put [Mr. Mortazavi] on notice that you cannot engage in torture and murder."

Prof. Akhavan acknowledged any investigation of Mr. Mortazavi would be difficult, but is not insurmountable.

The crux of the case is the fact Mr. Mortazavi, as the top prosecutor in Tehran, is responsible for Evin prison, where Ms. Kazemi was taking photographs of protesters at the time of her arrest and where she was detained and interrogated.

Mr. Mortazavi is alleged to have ordered her arrest and instructed officials to publicly claim her death was caused by a stroke. A presidential committee later found Ms. Kazemi died of head injuries. Mr. Mortazavi then explained that Ms. Kazemi had accidentally fallen.

A report by the Connecticut-based Iran Human Rights Documentation Center dispelled Mr. Mortazavi's theory of a fatal fall, finding Ms. Kazemi's head injuries were most likely caused by a blow to the jaw that separated the base of her skull from her spinal chord.

Iran's judiciary eventually charged a low-ranking intelligence official with unintentionally killing Ms. Kazemi during interrogation but an Iranian court cleared him of the charge.

Canada's push for a further investigation of Mr. Mortazavi was rejected by the Iranian courts.

In practical terms it is unlikely Mr. Mortazavi would ever be brought to trial here, said Prof. Akhavan.

But he said it would make other countries think twice before issuing a wanted man a visa to travel abroad, even on a diplomatic passport, making him a prisoner in his own country.

"It's a bold step but it's a situation that calls for bold steps."

*National Post*  
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## GAY MARRIAGE FOE LOSES UNION DUES CHALLENGE

BY JANICE TIBBETTS

OTTAWA • A devout Catholic who opposes paying dues to one of Canada's largest unions because of its strong support for gay marriage lost a key legal challenge yesterday to divert the money to her Church in protest.

Susan Constock, a senior public servant in Toronto who has worked for the federal government for almost 35 years, unsuccessfully argued that forcing her to pay about \$800 a year in union dues to the Public Service Alliance of Canada was a violation of her right to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

The Federal Court ruling, released yesterday, sided with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which rejected Ms. Constock's complaint that she is being discriminated against based on her religious beliefs.

"The evidence does not show how her freedom of religion and conscience was compromised by this policy," wrote Justice Frederick Gibson. "The fact that she opposes the union's political or social causes does not force her to act in a way contrary to her beliefs or her conscience."

"This is important because it demonstrates that your right to practise your religion is not impaired by paying dues to a union whose views you do not share," said Andrew Raven, an Ottawa lawyer for the 150,000-member union.

*CanWest News Service*

# FREE INFORMATION SESSION

## Putting Neuropathic Pain on the Podium

Don't miss this FREE Information Session with guest speakers:

Charmaine Crooks, Five-time Olympian and Dr. Angela Mailis-Gagnon, Director, Comprehensive Pain Program, Toronto Western Hospital.

When: April 12, 2007  
7-9 p.m.

Where: University of Toronto  
Leslie Dan Pharmacy Bldg.  
144 College Street  
Room B150

## NeP kNOw more Neuropathic Pain™

### Are you living with pain?

Is it burning, shooting or numb?  
Does it affect your ability to work or participate in any activities?  
Does it affect your sleep and/or mood?  
Is this pain other than a headache or a migraine?  
Would you describe your pain as any of the following?

- Hot/burning
- Numb
- Pins and needles
- Electric shock-like
- Particularly painful with the touch of clothes or bed sheet

These are some of the symptoms of neuropathic pain (NeP).

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