Dr. Shirin Ebadi  
University of Alberta Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights  

David Percy: Doctor Amrhein, Dr. Ebadi, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome to the seventh annual University of Alberta Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights. My name is David Percy. I'm Dean of the Faculty of Law, and it's my pleasure to be part of this event and to welcome you tonight on behalf of the entire University committee. The University of Alberta launched this Lectureship in 1998 in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the universal declaration of human rights. The 30 banners carried to the stage represent the 30 articles in the declaration. The banners proclaim these articles and remind us of the commitments that Canada undertook when it signed the declaration in 1948. In offering this Lectureship, the University hopes to provide the citizens of Alberta with an opportunity to come together each year and to rededicate ourselves to issues that require our vigilance and support. The Lectureship continues to the long tradition of the University of providing an environment for the discussion of controversial and difficult subjects. By doing so, we each have an opportunity to learn, question and participate in the events that shape the world. It is a tremendous honour for the University of Alberta that Dr. Shirin Ebadi will tonight deliver the seventh annual Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights. As part of our program, Sia Samimi, an internationally recognized musician originally from Iran but now living in Edmonton will perform a musical selection written especially for tonight's program entitled Nassimi-az-vatan, meaning a Breeze from Home. I would like to remind you to turn off your cell phones and ask you not to use any recording devices or take photographs during this evening's proceedings. Again, welcome to the University of Alberta Visiting Lectureship in Human rights.

[ Applause ]

[ Musical Selection ]

[ Applause ]
Alexis Pepin: Good evening, Dr. Amrhein, Dr. Ebadi, Dean Percy, fellow students, ladies and gentlemen. I am Alexis Pepin, President of the Graduate Students' Association, and it is an honour for Jordan Blatz, President of the Students' Union, and for me to introduce to you tonight Dr. Shirin Ebadi. Dr. Ebadi is an outspoken advocate for human rights, particularly for women and children. Born in Iran, she pursued studies in law at the University of Tehran, receiving a Master's Degree in 1971. In 1975 she became president of the city court in Tehran, the first woman to hold such a position. Following the Islamic revolution in 1979, she was forced to resign her presidency when women were banned from holding such positions. Dr. Ebadi advocates reformed Islam, an interpretation of Islamic law which allows for greater conformity with fundamental human rights. Through this endeavor, she has sought to reform Iran's family laws, such as divorce and inheritance laws and worked to address issues of domestic abuse, and she has also fought for the rights of street children.

Jordan Blatz: Following her resignation from the city court, Dr. Ebadi wrote many articles in Iranian periodicals which greatly increased her recognition in Iran. She has authored a number of books advocating for increased rights for children and women, and has founded the association for support of children's rights and the center for the defense of human rights. Both organizations are active in Iran. Upon resuming her legal career in 1993, with the opening of her law office, she took on several highly controversial and politically sensitive cases. She successfully sought justice for members of the Iranian intellectual community who were murdered by members of the Iranian intelligence ministry. Dr. Ebadi has also worked to reveal the truth behind the attack in 1999 on students in the University of Tehran, an attack that resulted in a number of injuries and deaths. Most recently she has represented the family of Zahra Kazemi, the Canadian photo journalist who was tortured and killed while in detention in Iran.

Alexis Pepin: Dr. Ebadi has received much international recognition for her work in combating human rights violations in Iran. In 2003, the Nobel Prize committee awarded her the most distinguished award an individual can receive, the Nobel Peace Price. This first female Iranian judge became the first Muslim woman and first Iranian woman to win this award. Her efforts to bring equality to women and children in Iran have brought several threats on her life, and she has even been jailed for her views and her work. Despite this danger, Dr. Ebadi continues to advance issues of human rights injustice in Iran. At great personal risk in her home country, she is active in
a struggle for a world where, in her own words, all human beings are of equal worth. We are honoured to have Dr. Ebadi here with us tonight. Dr. Ebadi's lecture will be translated by Dr. Mannani from the University's department for comparative literature.

Jordan Blatz: In preparation of this evening's lecture, students were asked to reflect on the importance of Dr. Ebadi's visit and her work in promoting and protecting human rights. It is our pleasure to introduce to you Daniela Sanhueza, a fourth year student in political science to present her reflection.

[ Applause ]

Daniela Sanhueza: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. And welcome. Dr. Shirin Ebadi has commented that any person who pursues human rights in Iran, must live in fear, from birth to death. But that she has learned to overcome that fear. I understand her message to be a testimony that the human will to live in a free and just society will prevail in the face of opposition. Her courage is a reminder that the human spirit cannot and will not be contained. Dr. Ebadi is a proud national of Iran, a state in which she has actively sought to advance the reinterpretation of Iranian Islamic law in order to harmonize it with democratic values and a wider conception of human rights. Her unwillingness to accept the status quo is counsel to Iranian society that it must not be complacent. Her determination to create discourse on the troubles of her country is a message to humankind that we must pay attention not only to Iran, but to other countries of the world in the same predicament. Her persistence of peaceful resolutions to conflict and her gains as a peaceful activist is living proof that in an age where conflict is resolved with further conflict, there truly are alternative solutions. Dr. Ebadi's sense of justice has led to her imprisonment, but such sacrifices has also contributed to the reformation of Iran's family laws and created dialogue and a call to action for the protection of the rights of women and children, thereby giving them hope and representation on both a national and international scale. I do not understand how Dr. Ebadi learns to live with the fear of threats to her safety as a consequence of her work; however, I have come to understand that through her activism she is expressing that life is precious. By defending democratic principles, Dr. Ebadi defends human rights, which are inseparable from human life. Her accomplishments and her convictions are a lesson to us all, that if we truly value life, we will not want a mere shadow of it, but nothing less than its complete expression.
Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to introduce to you the recipient of the 2003 Nobel Peace prize. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Dr. Shirin Ebadi.

[ Applause ]

Dr. Ebadi (delivered in Farsi, translated by Dr. Manijeh Mannani): Dear Dr. Carl Amrhein, the Provost, dear respected professors, dear students, ladies and gentlemen. I am happy to be talking to you today at the University of Alberta. A university is the main home and a true shelter for those who have made intellectualism their top priority. People who have dedicated their lives to humanity. People who are proud of themselves not because of their bank accounts but because of the number of books they have authored. People who are proud of the students they have educated and not just proud of material possessions. Canada has a remarkable report card in this sense: the number of its universities, its experienced professors and the motivated students pursuing knowledge. Many young Iranian people are studying in Canada. Some of our best professors are teaching in Canada. I am very grateful for you for generously sharing your facilities with my fellow Iranians.

Dear respected colleagues, dear honourable professors, it is only under calm and peaceful circumstances that knowledge can be pursued, creativity flourish and civilization under those circumstances can move forward. But not every silence is peaceful and not every peace is durable. Peace will be durable only if it is based on two steady concepts: justice and democracy. Other than this, provided there would be any silence, it will not be peace contributing to it, but suppression. The silence of a suppressed society, a society in which people cannot express their minds and in which any opposing voice is silenced by detention and bullets is a silence of a cemetery. That silence sooner or later will be disturbed and no one will benefit from it. We should not forget the silence dominating the former Soviet Union that lasted 70 years and a silence that is now prevalent in many countries of the world.

We have to maintain peace and consecrate it and prior to that we have to respect equality and democracy. From another perspective, peace has two layers, an interior and an exterior one, like the world we live in. We live on the surface of the Earth, but we are still unaware of the depths and secrets of the world underneath. Without an internal peace, its external counterpart will not mean anything. An internal peace is one that is accomplished through a purposeful existence. People who do not yet have any defined goal in life are wanderers who can't find peace anywhere
and who cannot find themselves anywhere. And this is the duty of us instructors to assist our students in their quest. We have to light a lamp above their path so they can see the light of the path and so that they can find themselves and be fulfilled while serving others. In other words, to be content in life and to serve the society and other people, are the pillars of internal peace. A society that can give top priority to this principle in its education policies and can educate young people who can assist others while enjoying their lives is certainly moving in the right direction, in the direction of peace. And in this case, peace originates from within us, it is fermented, flows through the family, and finally flows into the arteries of society. In other words, peace starts from school, and flows into the country and reaches the international realm. In this way, teachers and professors function as pillars of peace in the national and international levels. And in this way, the connection between scientific circles throughout the world becomes the most important factor in the advancement and stability of peace. The exchange of students and professors translating books into different languages, setting up correspondence schools and universities, organizing international conferences, all of these are big steps in achieving international and scientific communication. Developed countries should generously share their knowledge with the students and scientific centres of the developing countries. The worst plague threatening knowledge is the reluctance to share it, which has unfortunately become prevalent in the world of late. After the event of September 11th, studying in some advanced and new technical fields like information technology, nuclear engineering and genetic engineering has been prohibited in the United States for students coming from developing countries. And students already enrolled in these programs have been warned to switch to other fields upon the completion of their first immediate degrees. Although they have not explicitly announced such prohibitions, some other countries have practically denied admission for students from developing countries applying for admission to faculties of advanced technologies. If we look at the world as an international village, then all should benefit equally from all its blessings, including science. We can't brag about globalizing and deprive the people from one part of the world of knowledge.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am from the Middle East, a region that has been subject to upheavals and unrests for some years now. In some circles, we hear people talking about changing the map of the Middle East, and the puzzled people of the region ask themselves if it is not the people of the country that can only determine their country's destiny. So why are others deciding about us. One day they assisted the Taliban to come to power, the next day, with the excuse of eradicating the Taliban, they invaded Afghanistan. They helped Saddam to power, gave him chemical
weapons to use against the people of Iran and the Kurds in Iraq, and later invaded Iraq with the excuse of dispossessing it of chemical weapons and bombs. Iranian soldiers, and also the civilians, after more than 15 years since the end of the war are still suffering from the horrendous consequences of chemical bombardment. They are well aware that without the support of some Western governments, Saddam would never have been able to be so dangerously equipped, and now that it is time to put the invaders on trial, not only Saddam but also those who had supported him should be held accountable in the face of humanity and the international world.

[ Applause ]

Ladies and gentlemen, I am from Iran, a country in the Middle East with a population of 70 million people, and a civilization that is 2500 years old. Iranians started a revolution 25 years ago that resulted in the establishment of the Islamic republic and the end of monarchy in Iran. Now, I want to ask permission to talk briefly to you about the situation of human rights in Iran. The government of Iran has joined the international alliance of civic, political and economical social rights and has agreed to execute them. But unfortunately, some of the internal regulations do not correspond to the international obligations of the government of Iran. For example, whereas international treaties of human rights emphatically reject crimes of discrimination, general discrimination still exists in law in Iran. For example, a man can have four wives and can divorce his wife without having any legitimate reason, whereas it is very difficult, sometimes impossible for women to ask for divorce in Iran. The testimony of two women in court equals one man's testimony. And the life of a woman is worth half as much as a man's. Therefore, if a man and a woman are injured in a collision with a car, the compensating amount paid to the woman will be half as much as the amount given to the man. And what is even stranger is that in a civil system in which the value, rights and freedom of women are less than those of men, their responsibilities and assignments are more. I am referring to the age of legal accountability in Iran. People are accountable for their crimes at a very early age: 9 years for girls and 15 for boys. This means the law treats a 9-year-old girl as severely as a 40-year-old grown-up in case she commits a crime. Whereas a nine-year-old and a 40-year-old cannot be compared in terms of maturity and awareness. Girls reach the age of legal accountability six years earlier than boys. This means in a country where the value and rights of women are half as much as those belonging to men, they become legally accountable for their deeds six years earlier than boys. According to Islamic
penalty law that was approved in 1991, if a man finds his wife in bed with another man, he has the right to kill his wife and the other man and he will face no punishment. Unfortunately, women do not benefit from such exemptions, and in practice it has been seen that some men have taken advantage of this article of law. And even more interesting is that these regulations are executed in a society where female university students constitute more than 63 percent of the total student body. In other words, the number of woman graduating from colleges and universities exceeds that of men. Alert Iranian women protest against these discriminatory laws, as a result of which the feminist movement is very profound and broad in Iran.

In Iran's regulations, discrimination based on religion also exists. The official religion in Iran is Shiite Islam, but other Islamic religions, the Jewish religion, Zoroastrianism and Christianity are officially recognized according to constitutional law. Other religions, like Buddhism and the Baha'i religion are not officially recognized. Moreover, Islam and the recognized religions are not viewed similarly, they are not treated equally. For instance, upon the death of a non-Muslim person, if there would be a Muslim among the deceased person's relatives, he or she will inherit what goes to the deceased person's relatives. For instance, if a Zoroastrian passes away and in case he has two sons and a daughter, his estate and possessions should be divided among his children. But if in case one of his cousins converts to Islam, the estate and all the possessions will go to him and the children will inherit nothing. Religious discrimination has many dimensions and there is no room to address them all here. The freedom of expression has been wronged in Iran. In a period less than two years, more than 90 newspapers and magazines have been suspended in Iran. A number of our journalists, writers and translators are now in prisons.

[ Applause ]

A number of our journalists - and I would like to praise the struggles of Yousefi Eshkevari, Saber, Rahmani, Alijani, Zarafshan, Ganji, and Abdi who are now in detention for the cause of freedom and in the way of freedom.

[ Applause ]

Democracy is not comprehensive in Iran since people cannot vote for those they want to vote for. Rather, the eligibility of the candidates has to be confirmed by the Guardian Council. The
extensive denials of eligibility during of the elections of the seventh parliament resulted in a remarkable decline in the number of voters.

Iranian people would like to improve their circumstances through peaceful and democratic methods, and they are ready for any kind of sacrifice to achieve this goal. The number of political prisoners in Iran proves this claim. Unfortunately, the plan of the dialogue of civilizations that was discussed by Mr. Khatami did not succeed due to fundamentalist avarice. If an individual or group, for whatever reason, did not or could not fulfill the promises they had made during political campaigns, the people of Iran have not forgotten their demands that are nothing but reform, and they are as motivated and diligent in achieving their rights.

Iran has a young population, more than 30 million of Iran's population are under 30 years old. This new generation is in need of jobs and professions compatible with its education. Unfortunately, the unemployment rate is high in Iran. Finding a suitable job that would enable a person to manage his or her family is a dream for many young people. Iran's younger generation demands more individual, social and political freedom, but they leave Iran since their legitimate rights are not recognized. According to the statistics published by UNESCO last year, Iran shows the largest number of educated people, experts, brains, leaving the country and this is a catastrophe for a country, and the government is to be blamed for this, as it does not recognize the needs of the younger generation.

But I have a word for the alert people of Canada. Globalization has also globalized war and peace. Without being directly involved in a war, you suddenly find yourselves facing its dire consequences. Therefore, if you are interested in living in a world away from war and violence, you have to combat them, be it in your country or anywhere else in the world.

[ Applause ]

And in this way, worldwide concepts come to life, and in this way the violation of human rights becomes an international topic and transcends internal borders. You, who live in Canada, cannot be indifferent towards the violation of human rights in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine or anywhere else in the world. We are all in the same boat, in the same ship, and the ship is on its way to a bigger civilization. Any damage done to any part of the ship will affect its motion. People's destinies are tied together. We cannot consider all the blessings of the world as our own and not allow the others to benefit from them too. We have to consider the share the others have in the
dreams we make our own. We cannot just think of technology and economic relations. Mankind's need for democracy and freedom is not any less important than his material needs. We have to consider human rights as the most genuine of gems and more important than financial success. We have to consider the share the others have in the dreams we make our own. Let's be generous as sunlight. Let's spread friendship like the wind. Let's allow the seed of kindness to grow within us as the earth does. Let's be kind to one another. Let's be kind. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

David Percy: Dr. Ebadi has kindly agreed to take some questions. There are two microphones which I can't see, but they're on the concourse level up there. We were fortunate enough to have Dr. Ebadi at the law school at lunch time, and I can assure you the question and answer period was terrific, so please let me encourage you to avail yourselves of the mike. It's very difficult for me to see, but I'll try to recognize anyone that comes to the microphone.
We have the first question here.

: Do you want me to introduce myself? Hi, my name is Patrick. I'm a recent graduate from the University of Alberta, I have a Masters in biochemistry. My question has to do with a practice called Falun Dafa also called Falun Gong, which is a spiritual practice in China, which people try to adhere to the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. Now, do you want to translate that first?
And then - so for 7 years it flourished in China under the support of the government, and then in 1999, Jiang Zemin former chair of the Communist Party of China declared it illegal and launched a vicious persecution where practitioners were captured, tortured and executed. And so my question is, what do you think of that - that the people of China and the rest of the world can do to help stop the persecution of Falun Gong in China. Thank you.

Dr. Ebadi: Establishing democracy and human rights is the duty of every nation. The people of all countries need the supports of the international world. The emotional and mental support of the international world. The best help to the Chinese people is to let the facts travel across the world. And in that way, you will attain the support of the international world, and the support of the world will force the governments to force China to respect the people's wish, human rights.
Hi, my name is Jenny Morris and I have a question regarding the United Nations, and I am also working on the issue of Middle East and Canadian Arabs in Canada and the Middle East situations and how it affects them. But my question has to do with the United Nations in terms of two scandals in the last week. The first had to do with the oil for food program, in which Annan's son was implicated in trying to swindle a whole bunch money, and the second had to do with an individual who was responsible for genocide in Rwanda and was able to get back pay even though he was responsible for this genocide. Now, given - sorry. Given the fact that Iran is now in the international sight because of the so-called nuclear capabilities and threats to Israel and so forth, how do you feel about what the confidence you can get from grassroots levels to raise awareness and not let Islamics take advantage of UN corruption and say, well, this international agency is not for Muslims, it's not going to help the Muslim situation. How do you feel about that?

Dr. Ebadi: The United Nations and ICC are the last hopes for Iran.

[ Applause ]

Dr. Ebadi: We have to try and support and strengthen the United Nations. Any weakening of the United Nations will harm smaller countries. The fact that the United States invaded Iraq without the approval of the United Nations is a disrespectful action towards the United Nations.

[ Applause ]

Dr. Ebadi: The fact that the government of Israel does not recognize the declarations of the United Nations is another disrespectful act.

[ Applause ]

Dr. Ebadi: Disrespectful behaviour towards the United Nations is disrespecting the conscience of humanity.
Dr. Ebadi: People should consistently - people in governments should consistently respect and support the United Nations.

: Dr. Ebadi, where do you find your personal courage?

Dr. Ebadi: I believe in the truth of my path and I also believe in God and that gives me strength.

: Hello, my name is <?>, I have a question in relation to the Zahra Kazemi case. I wrote a letter to Bill Graham when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time on behalf of my family, my father and because we are Iranian immigrants, and I would like to know from -- how you see it, what else the Canadian government can do regarding this case?

Dr. Ebadi: The case of Mrs. Kazemi in the first court resulted in issuing a verdict which we protest against. The case is now in the appeal courts, and we are awaiting for the decision of the court. As the lawyer for this case, I will not stop until justice is restored.

Dr. Ebadi: And you ask for what Canada, the government of Canada can do, should do? This is a question the government of Canada should answer. They know better what facilities they have, so
I cannot talk for the government of Canada. What I know is that we Iranians, myself and others in Iran, we won't stop. We will continue to fight for this case.

[ Applause ]

: Hello, I'm <?>, my question is - I mean, clearly people in Iran and elsewhere have to find their own path, but what can we here as citizens of Edmonton, as University of Alberta students, what can we do to help the people of Iran achieve more democracy and more human rights in their country?

[ Applause ]

Dr. Ebadi: Try to reflect the situation in Iran the way it is, not any whiter or any blacker than it is. When the people of the world find out what the demands of the Iranians are, they will support us, the world will support us.

: Hello, my name is Lawrence Saunders. I'm a Canadian who married a Persian from Iran. My question is one day I hope to return to Iran with my wife, but my question is how do you see the government changing without bloodshed?

Dr. Ebadi: Myself, before thinking of kinds of government, I think about the question of how to govern a country. It's not important what the government of Iran is called. The important question is how it operates, how the government operates, and how it respects people. And human rights. And this is something I and others are after, respect for democracy and human rights.

: My name is <?> and first I would like to welcome you as an Iranian to Edmonton. It's an honour to see you here, to have you here, as a person who spent most of her life trying to get democracy for people and for human rights. My question as an ex-political prisoner, with a recent domination of the fundamentalists, for the most part the government, from presidential and so on, how hopeful are you in the struggle of the people for democracy? How - especially with the recent
capture of the writers, with the recent decrease in personal freedoms and all of that, how hopeful are you?

Dr. Ebadi: Fighting for democracy is a long one, and its success won't be achieved over night. And it will be possible to achieve democracy without bloodshed in Iran if the number of the defenders of human rights increases. When I look back, I think our path has been courageous so far, what has been done has been right. 25 years ago, at the beginning of the revolution, when fundamentalists, who were greater by number at that time, whenever they wanted to insult somebody, they would call him or her a liberal or a defender of human rights. But today defending human rights is a social value in Iran. Many people, including the fundamentalists, now declare themselves as defenders of human rights, regardless of the fact that they themselves violate human rights. And this is a success for the defenders of human rights. Take a look at the number of people who participate in elections. It's dropping, the number is dropping. Because people are protesting why the guardian council should approve the eligibility of the candidates beforehand. But my young friend, do not be disappointed. Have hope. The path that the Iranian people have chosen has not been without a defining goal, although there is still a distance until we attain our goal, until we reach it, but our path has been the right one.

[ Applause ]

David Percy: We'll take two more questions, first on this microphone and then on that microphone.

: [ Question in Farsi ]

Translator, Dr. Manijeh Mannani: In your remarks you mentioned that gender discrimination is operating in Iran, a discrimination that is based on Islam. I would like to know your opinion about the nature of these regulations.

[ Applause ]

Dr. Ebadi: The regulations aren't Islam, they are interpretations of Islam.
Dr. Ebadi: Like any other religion or ideology, Islam has many interpretations, it can have many interpretations. Even in Christianity you can hear different interpretations about a single topic. The situation is exactly the same with Islam. The difference in legal rights between women - among women of different Islamic countries proves this point. In Indonesia, which is one of the most important Islamic countries, and its population is 200 million, Muslim women live and they can even become president. But in other Islamic countries, women cannot participate in elections. In some Islamic countries, women are punished for not wearing the veil. In other Islamic societies, women can choose what to wear. We have polygamy in some Islamic countries and in others it is forbidden. Therefore, the question is which Islam? Which interpretation of Islam? A dynamic Islam, an Islam that's compatible with the needs of the people of the time. An Islam that is compatible with the belief in the equality between men and women, the source of women's suffering particularly.

: Last question.

: Thank you for your wise and strong words this evening. My question is in Iran, do you believe that democracy and human rights can be achieved without a distinct separation between state and religion?

Dr. Ebadi: I have announced many times that I do believe in democracy. A democracy needs the rule of the majority, what the majority wants and needs. If, in a society, the majority wants the separation of state and religion, then it should be done. But pay attention, that even democracy has a framework. This means that the majority that comes to power cannot rule the country the way it wants. Democracy should be executed within the framework of human rights. It is a blending of democracy and human rights that guarantees the happiness of a society. And we are striving towards one such society.
David Percy: That brings to a close the question and answer portion of this evening, which we can see Dr. Ebadi engaged in with the usual spirit. Dr. Amrhein will now conclude the evening.

Dr. Carl Amrhein: Thank you, Dean Percy. I would like to take a moment to thank Ms. Alexis Pepin, Mr. Jordan Blatz and Ms. Daniela Sanhueza for their introduction to this evening's lecture. A very special thanks to Sia Samimi for sharing his beautiful music with us. Thank you, Mr. Samimi, wherever you are. This lectureship would not exist without the generosity of the many citizens, corporations and foundations of Edmonton and beyond who believe it is important for our community to hear speakers such as Dr. Ebadi, speakers who celebrate and explain powerful ideas, who inspire and provoke discourse and who remind us all of the responsibility we have as signatories to the universal declaration of human rights, to all of our donors in the audience this evening, your gifts provide this annual opportunity for us as a community to learn, to question, and to participate in the events which shape the world in which we live. On behalf of the entire community, thank you very much.

Dr. Carl Amrhein: To all of the many volunteers, friends, and staff who made this evening possible, thank you for your ongoing contributions in so many forms to this lectureship. As advocates for peace, for equality and human dignity for all, your support of this lectureship means that the University achieves its goal to engage not only our students, but our entire community to contribute broadly as citizens of the world. Thank you once again.

Dr. Carl Amrhein: A very special note of gratitude is owed to Dr. Mannani for her translation from Farsi to English, and also to our translators from English into sign language. Thank you all.

Dr. Ebadi, we are honoured that you accepted our invitation to deliver the University of Alberta Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights. We hope you will also accept our deep appreciation for your
presentation here this evening. It has been our honour and privilege to find ourselves in the presence of you, an individual who not only articulates great ideas, but who provides an example of how to live a principled and engaged life, committed to the ideals of human rights, bringing both courage and passionate relevance to the struggle for justice in an increasingly complicated world. You are one of those very special people of the world who can inspire others through the sheer force of your will. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

Dr. Carl Amrhein: In appreciation of your visit, and on behalf of the University of Alberta, we would like to present to you a gift. If you would please join me at the podium. The gift is an Inuit carving. It is called an Inukshuk. It is a beacon, a marker left as a guide by those who have found their way for people who come after them. The Inukshuk is arranged in the shape of a human being that says “I have been here and you are on the right track”. Though made of an inanimate rock, it embodies the spirit and the persistence of the Inuit, who thrive despite living in one of the world's harshest climates. Just as protecting the human rights of individual members of the community is the responsibility of the entire community, so too must Inukshuks be built by people working together as a community. Your lecture here this evening has provided strength, leadership and motivation for our entire community, and I have every faith that we will move forward as individuals and as a community to strive more strenuously for social justice the world over. We hope you that the Inukshuk will remind you of the deep appreciation we have for your work and the very high esteem in which we hold you.

[ Applause ]

: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us for this evening's lecture. Good night and have a safe journey home.