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Selection Committee

Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies

University of Toronto

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies for the 2025–2026 academic year. My doctoral research focuses on geomarketing and tourism business development in Iran, with a specific emphasis on spatial analytics, location intelligence, and the geography of consumer behavior in cultural tourism contexts. I am now seeking to expand this expertise into the area of climate and heritage risk, an emerging field where spatial technologies, environmental data, and cultural policy intersect—precisely the direction of the postdoctoral project I am proposing.

My postdoctoral proposal, ***Tangible Heritage at Risk: Climate Change and Cultural Heritage in Iran***, aims to apply geospatial and remote sensing methodologies to evaluate how environmental changes—especially land subsidence, drought, and temperature anomalies—are threatening Iran’s most significant tangible heritage sites. This research is a natural progression of my doctoral work, in which I explored the spatial dynamics of tourism behavior and the locational vulnerabilities of tourism enterprises in historical urban cores. I am particularly interested in creating data-driven heritage risk maps, developing a Heritage Vulnerability Index, and producing outputs that are both academically rigorous and policy-relevant.

I would also like to respectfully inform the committee that due to a 12-day period of armed conflict and infrastructure disruption in my region, I experienced severe limitations in internet access, which unfortunately delayed the completion of some application materials. I kindly ask for your understanding in this regard, and I deeply appreciate your consideration of the difficult circumstances under which this application has been finalized.

I am excited by the prospect of joining the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute’s vibrant community of scholars. The opportunity to work at the intersection of Iranian Studies, spatial analysis, and environmental heritage aligns perfectly with both my academic background and future ambitions. I have attached my CV and project synopsis and I will ensure that recommendation letters are submitted as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if any further information is required.

Ataherh Ayashi

