



Press release

For immediate release

Justice Dennis O'Connor orders the release of certain redacted RCMP documents

Ottawa, November 26, 2004 – Mr. Justice Dennis O'Connor who heads the Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar, ordered today the release of redacted RCMP documents that were filed as exhibits at the Inquiry. Redactions were made to the documents by the government as part of its claims on National Security Confidentiality (NSC). The Commissioner has not, as yet, ruled on these NSC claims. However, it is important to note that in order to carry out his mandate, the Commissioner has access to the unredacted versions of these documents.

The redacted documents made public today relate to the conduct of the RCMP and its officers in respect to Maher Arar. The more than 1000 pages of documents are divided into four general sections: a personal and professional profile of Maher Arar; a series of post 9/11 documents dealing with RCMP activities; the transcripts of interviews of Inspector Brian Garvie who conducted an internal review resulting from complaints filed against the RCMP with the RCMP Public Complaints Commission and, finally, a chronology and supporting documents dated between 2002 and 2004.

In his ruling, Commissioner O'Connor cites the following reasons for making the documents public at this time: "This is a public inquiry and to the extent possible evidence should be made public in a timely manner. In my view, absent a demonstration of unfair prejudice to a party or of a likelihood that the public will be misled or confused by disclosure of the documents in their redacted form, they should be released."

Counsel for the Commission will not comment on these documents as they are part of the evidence put before the Commission. The Commissioner's ruling can be found at www.ararcommission.ca

Established under Part I of the Inquiries Act, the Arar Inquiry was set up on the recommendation of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to investigate and report on the actions of Canadian officials in relation to Maher Arar. The Commissioner is also mandated to make recommendations that he considers advisable on an arm's length review mechanism for the activities of the RCMP with respect to national security.

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