



Press release

For immediate release

Arar Commission reschedules hearings

Ottawa, July 14, 2004 - Mr. Justice Dennis R. O'Connor, Commissioner of the Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar announced today that unfortunately it is necessary to reschedule the public hearings for the weeks of July 19 and 26.

The Commission has decided that it should not proceed with the evidence scheduled for those weeks until several thousand additional documents have been reviewed, some of which have yet to be received, and matters of national security have been fully considered. Technical problems which only became apparent recently have added to the difficulty of the document review process. It is expected that the Commission will have received and reviewed the additional documents by the end of August and should be in a position to proceed apace at that time.

From the outset, the Commission anticipated that the document production and review process for this Inquiry would be particularly complicated because of national security concerns. Nevertheless, the Commission attempted to proceed as quickly as possible. This led to the scheduling of the first round of factual witnesses during the weeks of July 19 and 26. As it turns out, that scheduling was overly ambitious.

The Commission wishes to make clear that this delay is not the fault of the government or any of the other parties to the Inquiry.

The work of the Commission will continue throughout the summer and, as previously scheduled, the Commission will proceed in September with evidence of witnesses from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The Commission had planned to hear the evidence of family members of Mr. Arar, former counsel to Mr. Arar, and Mr. Nureddin during the weeks of July 19 and 26. This evidence will be scheduled for a date in the fall.

More information will be available shortly on our Web site: 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 Commission is also mandated to recommend an arm's length review mechanism for the activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with respect to national security.

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