



## Press release

### For immediate Release

### **U.S. declines to directly cooperate with Arar Commission of Inquiry**

**Ottawa, September 21, 2004** - In a reply to a letter sent on May 26, 2004, the U.S. State Department informed the Commission of Inquiry into the actions of Canadian Officials in relation to Maher Arar that: "The United States government declines to provide documents (...) or to provide statements by individuals involved in this case, or to facilitate witnesses appearing before the commission.(...) We would note that as your inquiries focus on the actions of Canadian authorities, many of these questions should best be directed to the Government of Canada, rather than to the United States Government."

"The State Department's decision not to send witnesses to testify before the Inquiry does not preclude other forms of cooperation between the Commission and the U.S. Government" said Lead Commission counsel Paul Cavalluzzo. He further added "I am confident that the Americans can provide assistance to the Inquiry, and we are hopeful that mutually beneficial arrangements can be made. Moreover, Commissioner Dennis O'Connor believes that even without the participation of the United States, the Inquiry will have all the relevant information to carry out his mandate."

The United States has established an internal review process in the Department of Homeland Security to look into the actions of U.S. Immigration officials in the deportation of M. Arar to Syria. This process came as a result of requests by – amongst others - Human Rights Watch group, and representatives of that group will be called as witnesses before the Commission when it resumes its public hearings.

Last week, the Commission started a series of *in camera* hearings. Mr. Cavalluzzo is pleased with the progress accomplished so far in the course of these confidential hearings.

*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. [www.ararcommission.ca](http://www.ararcommission.ca).*

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