



Communiqué

For immediate release

Arar Commission Reports Expected to be Released by End of Summer

Ottawa, April 11, 2006 - Mr. Justice Dennis R. O'Connor, Commissioner of the Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar announced today that he expects his reports will be released to the public by the end of the summer. He indicated that this is about five months later than he had originally anticipated. The delay is largely attributable to the process that has been adopted for screening the reports for the government's claims that some information must be kept confidential because of concerns about national security confidentiality (NSC).

The Commissioner has developed a process under which his reports are being reviewed by the government for claims of NSC. If the government asserts NSC claims that are in dispute, the Commissioner will conduct a hearing and issue a ruling on the disputed claims. The Commission has retained Reid Morden, a former director of CSIS, to advise on issues of NSC and to give evidence at hearings, if necessary. To date, there has been one such hearing. There may be more hearings in the near future. Any remaining areas of disagreement will be resolved by the Federal Court; however applications to the Court will not delay the release of the balance of the reports.

While this process is complicated and time-consuming, the Commissioner decided that it was the most responsible and efficient way to address the difficult issues relating to the government's national security claims as they apply to his reports.

Commission Lead Counsel, Paul Cavalluzzo indicated that: "at the end of this process there may be areas of disagreement between the Commissioner and the government, but the Commissioner remains confident that there will be public disclosure of all of his conclusions and recommendations together with a coherent narrative of the events that relate to Mr. Arar; through discussions, the parties have reduced the scope of the NSC claims that the government made during the course of the Inquiry."

There are two parts to the Commission's mandate and Justice O'Connor has prepared a separate report for each one. The first addresses the actions of Canadian officials in relation to what happened to Mr. Arar. That report contains the Commissioner's findings and his recommendations based on those findings.

The second report - which will be tabled separately - makes recommendations for a review mechanism for the RCMP's national security activities.

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While the Commissioner is disappointed that the reports cannot be released sooner, he is satisfied that the process being followed will reduce areas of dispute and may, in the long run, actually expedite public disclosure of his reports.

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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