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Diab gets date for extradition hearing

By TERRI SAUNDERS, COURT BUREAU

Last Updated: 2nd June 2009, 10:48pm

More than a year after he was arrested on suspicions he played a role in a deadly Paris bombing nearly three decades ago, a University of Ottawa professor will finally face an extradition hearing in the new year.

On Jan. 4, Hassan Diab, 55, will go before a judge who will decide if he should be sent to France to face allegations he participated in the 1980 bombing of a Paris synagogue that killed four people and wounded dozens of others.

Charged by Paris police with four counts of murder and 40 counts of attempted murder, Diab has maintained his innocence since he was arrested in late 2008.

At the time, his lawyer, Rene Duval, suggested his client was a victim of mistaken identity. Diab would go on to fire Duval, but expressed shock at both his arrest and an initial failure to be released on bail.

At a second bail hearing on March 31, Diab was released with strict conditions. Monitored with a GPS electronic ankle bracelet, Diab is under virtual house arrest and cannot leave unless he is accompanied by one of five individuals who posted a combined \$250,000 in bail bonds.

Judge Robert Maranger said Diab is presumed innocent until proven guilty and might be in a position to successfully fight any order to transport him to France to face the charges. "In my view, this is not a case where extradition is a rubber stamp or a foregone conclusion," said Maranger.

terri.saunders@sunmedia.ca

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