

Murray Segal selected to lead external review of Hassan Diab extradition case

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Former Ontario chief prosecutor Murray Segal has been selected to lead an external review of the extradition of Ottawa professor Hassan Diab.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould said in a statement late Thursday that Segal “will be given the tools, access and discretion necessary to conduct a thorough and independent review of the case.”

The RCMP arrested Diab, a Canadian of Lebanese descent, in November 2008 in response to a request by France, which suspected him of being involved in the 1980 bombing of a Paris synagogue that killed four people, an accusation he has always denied.

In June 2011, Ontario Superior Court Justice Robert Maranger committed Diab for extradition despite acknowledging the case against him was weak. The following year, then-justice minister Rob Nicholson signed an extradition order surrendering Diab to France.

The Ontario Court of Appeal upheld both decisions and the Supreme Court of Canada declined to review the matter.

Diab’s supporters have long argued he was in Beirut – not Paris – when the attack took place and that his fingerprints, palm prints, physical description and age did not match those of the suspect identified in 1980.

In November 2014, Diab was sent to France, where he was held in solitary confinement up to 22 hours a day. In January, French judges dismissed the allegations against Diab and ordered his immediate release.

Diab, 64, is back in Canada with his wife and children. However, French prosecuting authorities have appealed his release, and a decision is expected on July 6.

Wilson-Raybould asked for an independent review of the extradition at the end of May to focus on whether the Extradition Act was followed in this case and if there are specific concerns that need to be addressed with regard to Canada's extradition treaty with France.

The sociology professor and his supporters have been urging the federal government to hold a full public inquiry into the case and to reform the Extradition Act to ensure individual rights are respected.

Segal, who is also a former deputy attorney general in Ontario, has more than 30 years of experience in law and government.

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