

CUSJ requests changes to Canada's flawed extradition laws

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NOTE: CUSJ President Margaret Rao sent this letter to the PMO on February 20th 2018. Copies were sent to Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Global Affairs, and Jody Wilson Raybould, Minister of Justice.

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ), I would like to thank you and Minister Freeland, and the staff at Global Affairs, for your role in bringing a modicum of justice to Dr. Hassan Diab, who has now returned to his family in Canada after three long years of mostly solitary confinement in a maximum security prison in France.

We extend our deepest thanks to Dr. Diab's French lawyers and the judges, who, for the eighth and final time, dismissed all allegations against Dr. Diab and ordered his immediate and unconditional release from detention. An overwhelming body of consistent evidence confirmed that Dr. Diab was in Beirut writing university exams when the heinous bombing of a Paris synagogue was perpetrated in October 1980.

Two justice systems failed Dr. Diab miserably for almost a decade. In November 2008, Dr. Diab was indiscreetly arrested by the RCMP, at the request of French authorities, while teaching a class at Carleton University. When finally released from detention, Dr. Diab was placed under strict house arrest for the next six years. At his long-running extradition trial, judge Robert Maranger concluded that the evidence against him was highly 'suspect,' but, due to a weakness in Canada's Extradition Act, which presumes that all extradition requests are "reasonable" Justice Maranger had no choice but to order Dr. Diab's extradition to France. The Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear Diab's final appeal to stay in Canada, and in November 2014 this innocent man was unceremoniously whisked away without being given a chance to say goodbye to his then-pregnant wife, Dr. Rania Tfaily, and his young daughter.

Donald Bayne, Dr. Diab's lawyer in Canada, expressed his gratitude to the French judges **"for their wisdom and courage to buck political and social pressure to make a completely just decision, something that we believe the courts in Canada failed to do at every level."**

I am aghast to think that a Canadian citizen was made to suffer nine years of judicial abuse, with no credible evidence and no charges laid against him! Incredibly, Dr. Diab harbours no ill

will towards the Canadian government and is not seeking compensation for his many years of loss of freedom and separation from his family. His only wish is that the Kafkaesque nightmare he endured not befall anyone else. Dr. Diab, and his family, friends and supporters are calling for a public inquiry and a thorough review of the Canadian extradition system. Acting on these basic demands is the least we can do to redeem Canada's reputation as a just and democratic society.

Standing on the Side of Love and Justice!!

Sincerely,

Margaret Rao
President, Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

Source: <https://cusj.org/news/cusj-requests-changes-to-canadas-flawed-extradition-laws>