

Politics

Hassan Diab calls for release of report on extradition that sent him to French prison



Ottawa academic spent more than three years in French custody before terrorism case collapsed

[David Cochrane](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jul 16, 2019 6:31 PM ET | Last Updated: July 16



Hassan Diab arrives for a press conference on the French Court of Appeal's decision in his case on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Friday, Oct. 26, 2018. (Justin Tang/THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Hassan Diab and his supporters are calling for the immediate release of the findings of an external probe into his extradition to France over allegations of involvement in a 1980 bombing outside a Paris synagogue.

Justice Minister David Lametti received the report nearly two months ago — but the findings still have not been shared with Diab or anyone outside of government.

"I am terribly disappointed by the lack of transparency and the extensive delays in making the external review report public," Diab told CBC News. "I expected better than this from Minister Lametti and the Liberal government."

Diab, a 65-year-old Ottawa university lecturer, was accused by French authorities of involvement in a 1980 terrorist attack which killed four people and injured more than 40.

He has consistently maintained his innocence. He was released in January 2018 after two French judges ruled the evidence against him wasn't strong enough to take to trial. He was never formally charged.

Diab was arrested by the RCMP in November 2008 and placed under strict bail conditions until he was extradited to France in 2014. Diab spent more than three years in prison in France before the case against him collapsed.

Government promises release "shortly"

While she was justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould tasked the former deputy attorney general of Ontario, Murray Segal, with conducting an external review of Diab's extradition.

A Department of Justice spokesperson said the Segal report will be made public but it's still in the final stages of translation and review.

"Our government is committed to transparency in this matter. We are taking the time to review and translate the report, and a timeline is being developed for its release. We should have more to say on that shortly," Rachel Rappaport said in an email.

Diab boycotted Segal's review. He argued that it fell short of his demand for a judge-led public inquiry with full subpoena power, which would have allowed Diab's lawyer Donald Bayne to cross-examine witnesses.

Bad timing

Nothing about the report's conclusions has been made public. Segal hasn't spoken about it publicly and has consistently directed media requests to the Department of Justice.

But his report landed on Lametti's desk in the middle of a diplomatic standoff with China over the pending extradition of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou to the United States. China has detained two Canadians — Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig — in apparent retaliation for Meng's arrest. Beijing has demanded her release as a precondition for improving relations between the two countries.



Meng Wanzhou leaves her home in Vancouver, British Columbia on Wednesday, May 8, 2019. (Ben Nelms/CBC)

The release of a report critical of Canada's extradition processes could complicate the Meng situation, though the Department of Justice denies the two are linked. Amnesty International said it would be "wholly unacceptable" if the Meng case is affecting the release of the Segal review.

Amnesty has been supporting Diab since his arrest more than a decade ago. It and groups like the B.C. Civil Liberties Association have been pressing for a public inquiry into Diab's case and the immediate release of the Segal report.

"It is unconscionable to keep Hassan Diab and his family waiting a single day longer to see what Murray Segal has uncovered," said Alex Neve, secretary general of Amnesty International

Canada. "Without the report, it is impossible to understand whether there are officials who should be held accountable and whether there is now a pressing need for a public inquiry."

Pressure to release grows

Diab's supporters in the ranks of organized labour also have been pressuring the government to release the Segal report. The national leadership of the Canadian Union of Public Employees wrote Lametti last month urging him to release the report without redaction and to call a public inquiry "into Dr. Diab's wrongful extradition."

The support group Justice for Hassan Diab has been urging grassroots supporters to call Lametti's office every Thursday and Friday until the report is released.

- **IN DEPTH** [Everything you need to know about Huawei, Meng Wanzhou and her possible extradition](#)
- [France told Canada key evidence did not exist in Hassan Diab terrorism case](#)
- [Canada helped France dig up evidence to extradite Ottawa man later freed on terror charges](#)

Diab himself appealed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to "put an end to this foot-dragging that is prolonging my suffering and that of my family, and to order a public and independent inquiry."

Diab is still waiting for the French Court of Appeal to deliver a ruling on whether the court would uphold the decision that saw him released from jail.

That court was supposed to hold a hearing in October of last year but no hearing took place.

If France wins its appeal, it could seek to extradite Diab a second time, or to try him in absentia.