

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



## French court ruling in Hassan Diab case deals a devastating blow to justice

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OTTAWA – Amnesty International is urging Canadian authorities to intervene on the case of Hassan Diab, after a French court ruled that the Ottawa academic must stand trial on groundless terrorism charges stemming from a 1980 synagogue bombing.

On Wednesday, France's court of appeal ordered Diab to face trial for the 40-year-old Paris bombing, even after a lower court cleared his name three years ago due to a lack of evidence. It is possible that such a trial could be held *in absentia*, or in his absence.

“The French court’s decision to keep pursuing this prolonged injustice against Hassan Diab is unacceptable,” said Ketty Nivyabandi, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada. “His family has been through so much over the past 12 years, only to learn that this painful saga is not over. The Canadian government must do everything in its power to have these charges dropped so Hassan and his family can move forward.”

In 2014, Diab was extradited from Canada to France, even though the Canadian extradition judge, Robert Maranger, described the evidence presented against Diab as “very problematic”, “convoluted”, “illogical”, and “suspect”. However, given the low threshold of evidence in Canada’s Extradition Act, the judge felt compelled to order Diab's extradition.

Diab spent more than three years in prison in France, most of which was in solitary confinement, while the decades-long investigation in his case was ongoing.

In January 2018, the French investigating judges dismissed all charges against Diab and ordered his release. They stated there was consistent evidence that Diab was writing exams in Lebanon at the time of the 1980 bombing that tragically killed four people and injured dozens in Paris. Further, the other evidence in the case, notably handwriting analysis and fingerprints, are clearly unreliable.

“There must of course be justice for the terrible 1980 synagogue bombing. But there is every reason to believe that the way this case has progressed is much more about politics than it is about law and justice,” said Alex Neve, senior fellow at the University of Ottawa’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and former secretary general of Amnesty International Canada. “And as a result, Hassan Diab’s human rights have been subverted, sold short and violated at every turn.”

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