



Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto
1774 Queen St East
Toronto, ON
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September 14, 2007

The Honourable Stockwell Day
MP Minister of Public Safety
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Building, 13th Floor
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P8

Re: A Public Review for Benamar Benatta

Dear Honourable Stockwell Day,

The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto, in support of the Benatta Coalition for a Public Review, is calling on the Canadian government to immediately review the circumstances of Benamar Benatta's illegal transfer to the United States on September 12, 2001.

Honourable Stockwell Day, on April 19, 2007, you made a promise in the House of Commons to investigate the case of Benamar Benatta; an Algerian refugee who, without a hearing, without counsel, and without any proceedings in his first language (French), was illegally turned over to the United States by Canadian authorities.

In the U.S., Mr. Benatta was treated as a suspect in the September 11, 2001 attacks and was imprisoned, abused and held in conditions that the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and the U.S. Department of Justice, found could be considered as torture. Despite being cleared by the FBI in November 2001 of any connection to terrorism, he spent nearly five years in detention.

In the House, your exact words were: "We want to know why this happened." Five months later, Mr. Benatta and people across Canada are still awaiting answers.

Since his return to Canada, Benatta sought records of his earlier refugee claim held by Canadian officials, but was informed his 2001 claim has been "misplaced." The Canadian government also erroneously alleges that Benatta withdrew his claim for asylum prior to the September 12, 2001 rendition, but has produced no documentation to support this claim.

Imagine how difficult it must be to get on with your life after living through such a nightmare. We are calling on the federal government to immediately convene a public review so that Mr. Benatta can get answers about why five years of his life were needlessly stolen, and how future cases of rendition can be stopped. We also urge you, as a first step, to implement the oversight recommendations from Justice O'Connor's report arising out of the Arar Commission. Laws must change to protect vulnerable people like Mr. Benatta and to make sure this never happens again.

The Mennonite New Life Centre, a newcomer settlement agency supported by the Toronto Area Mennonite Churches, strongly objects to the unjust scapegoating of refugees like Mr. Benatta in

the name of security. For Mennonites, peace and security are primary concerns. However, we believe that true peace depends on security for all, especially the most vulnerable.

We trust that you share our concern to make Canada a safe place for all. We thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter and we look forward to your positive actions towards implementing a review.

Sincerely,

Tanya Chute Molina
Executive Director

cc. Prime Minister Stephen Harper