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## Abdullah Almalki: Chronology

*The following is a chronology of events prepared by Abdullah Almalki and his legal counsel, Paul Copeland. It is based on what Abdullah and his family remembers about their encounters with law enforcement or security officials in Canada, the United States and Malaysia, and Abdullah's detention, interrogation and torture in Syria. The names of people Abdullah was questioned about are omitted in order to protect their privacy. **For more information please contact Paul Copeland at (416) 964-8126, ext. 142.***

**Early summer, 1998**

**CSIS agent Theresa Sullivan telephoned and asked if she could meet with Abdullah. He agreed, and they met a couple days later at a coffee shop. This was Abdullah's first-ever experience with any security agents.** She was alone.

She asked Abdullah about his family, his education, and his business. Abdullah saw no reason not to answer all her questions, and described much of his life to her. Sullivan asked if he had an opinion about Syria opening an embassy in Canada. She told him that some Syrians were concerned that this would be used as a base for *mukabarat* (Syrian intelligence) to spy on the Syrian community in Canada.

Abdullah saw no reason not to be open about his work history with her and told her about his work in Pakistan and Afghanistan. She seemed surprised to learn that he had worked with Human Concern International (HCI), as a Projects Director. Abdullah explained that he had left in 1994 because of disagreements with HCI's regional director, Ahmad Said Khadr, and that they had not been in contact since. She asked if Abdullah had received military training, and whether he knew any of the mujahideen in Afghanistan, and he said no. She spoke about American and Pakistani support for the Taliban, and asked if Abdullah sold equipment to the Taliban, and he told her he had not.

At the end of the meeting, Abdullah asked her why she had come to talk with him, and she replied that they do these kinds of interviews randomly.

**Late summer, 1998**

**Abdullah was questioned for the second time by CSIS agent Theresa Sullivan.** Abdullah saw no reason why he should not meet and agreed. She said she wanted to meet because the Canadian government was interested in how the Muslim community was responding to the U.S. attack on the pharmaceutical factory in Sudan. Her questions, however, were focussed on Osama Bin Laden and Ahmad Said Khadr, and he told her again that he did not know Khadr well. She wanted to know more about Khadr's relationship with Bin Laden, even if it

was just speculation on Abdullah's part. He explained that it would be hard to imagine Khadr working under anyone because he likes to be his own boss. She asked again if Abdullah sold equipment to the Taliban, and he said again that he did not.

**1999**

**Abdullah and his employees noticed that starting in 1999, every box in every shipment they received had been opened and re-sealed with customs tape.** This was highly unusual, as in the past, customs had only done spot checks, if any. They made inquiries and were told that these were just "random checks."

**December 1999**

**Abdullah was stopped in Vancouver on his way home with a business associate from a two-week business trip to Hong Kong,** where they were meeting suppliers and buying equipment. His luggage was thoroughly searched by two agents, one in uniform and one plain-clothed. They were particularly interested in his invoices, suppliers' and clients' names, and other work-related documents he was carrying. They took all his documents into another room. They asked him to name the companies he dealt with, as well as all the places he ships to, and he did. Then they asked him to write details about how he conducted his business, such as how he transfers funds. He asked why they wanted all this information, feeling it was not their right to have it. They responded that when someone is passing through customs, they have no rights. Abdullah thought that it was very unusual for customs agents to ask such detailed questions about his business.

Once he returned home, a man he knew from the Muslim community called him and asked to meet. He was a taxi driver and had bought a two-way radio from Abdullah some time before. **The man told Abdullah that CSIS had asked him to go into Abdullah's house to look for bomb-making equipment.** The man had refused saying that he knew Abdullah and his business and that their suspicions were unfounded. Abdullah was shocked to learn that this man had been asked to do this. His company had never dealt with materials related to weapons of any kind.

**Early January, 2000**

After having travelled frequently to the U.S. without incident for several years, **Abdullah was stopped by U.S. immigration officials on his way to Las Vegas** for an annual consumer electronics show. He was questioned for less than fifteen minutes. They let him continue on his travels once they established that he was a Canadian citizen and not a refugee.

Abdullah thinks that it was around this time in early 2000 that **he was told that people in the Muslim community were being questioned about him by CSIS.**

**February 8, 2000**

Violaine Pepin from **CSIS telephoned Abdullah** at his office and said that she wanted to talk with him and he agreed to meet with her on February 11.

**February 11, 2000**

**Abdullah met with CSIS agents Violaine Pepin (badge number W06175) and "Dave"** (badge number W05337) as arranged. They questioned him about what he had told customs agents in Vancouver, and about his trip to Hong Kong. Abdullah was disturbed when they told him that he had said things he had not said to customs agents. For example, when he had been asked if he was travelling with someone else, he had told them yes, but that that man had returned to Canada a week earlier. CSIS now said that he had hid the fact that he had been travelling with someone else. The man Abdullah had been travelling with was a Muslim Canadian businessman who has a commercial pilot's license. They also questioned him again about his business.

After he met with CSIS, Abdullah talked about the meeting with his wife, Khuzaimah Kalifah. He described "Dave", the agent who had refused to give his full name. Khuzaimah said that it sounded like **this was the same man who had come to see their house twice**, each time with a different real estate agency, while Abdullah was in Hong Kong (their landlord was selling the house they were renting).

Abdullah was growing more and more concerned about the CSIS questioning, what the taxi driver told him, what had happened with customs, and what his wife told him, so went to see a lawyer, Michael Neville. Mr. Neville **advised him not to meet with CSIS again without a lawyer present.** CSIS did not contact Abdullah again until late in 2001.

**March 3, 2000**

**Abdullah was inadvertently informed by his bank, Scotia Bank, that he was under investigation** when they called to inquire about a dormant account he had had since high school. A bank teller called him and said that because, as he knew, he was under investigation, she needed information about the dormant account. Abdullah was surprised, and asked what she meant and she seemed to try to cover up her slip, saying that this was a routine check.

### Early July, 2000

Abdullah and his family were moving into a new home. They were told by the landlord there would be a delay as the previous tenant had not moved out on time. Abdullah was able to move some things in on second or third day of the month, and his family needed to clean before moving in a few days later. In the meantime, **Abdullah was worried that intelligence officials would go in to bug the house, and sprinkled baby powder in the front hall so that he could tell if anyone went in.** The next morning, he returned and found footsteps in the powder. Abdullah called the Ottawa Police Service to report a break and enter. The officer he spoke with took his name and the details but said they could not take it further. Abdullah thinks he remembers being told this was because there was no evidence of forced entry and nothing was damaged or stolen.

### Summer, 2000

**Abdullah received copies of old credit card statements for his American Express card** in the mail, dating back as far as 1998. He did not understand why these had been sent to him so he telephoned American Express. He was told that on two occasions he, Abdullah, had requested copies of these and other statements from them and they had sent them, as he requested to his mailing address. Abdullah had not made the requests, and realized that someone else must have impersonated him, and must be intercepting his mail and missed this envelope.

### September 18, 2001

**CSIS agent Alexander Gelvan went to Abdullah's home** at approximately 8:30 p.m.. Abdullah was upset that they came so late to his family home, and told him he should go see his lawyer. Gelvan was apologetic about the lateness and abruptness of his visit, but said there was no need to involve a lawyer, and proceeded anyway with his questions saying he should feel free not to answer. Gelvan questioned him about the Canadian Muslim man he had been asked about before. Gelvan said he knew that this man had a commercial pilot's license. He seemed to be implying that this man had been one of the hijackers that had attacked the U.S. and that he was missing. Abdullah was shocked and told him that this man would never do anything like that. He also told him that the attacks were not consistent with Islamic teachings. Abdullah called the Muslim man after Gelvan left, and left him a message. The man called him back the next day, and told him that CSIS had been coming to his office daily since the attacks in the U.S.

**Late September, 2001**

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, **an RCMP Joint Force Investigative Team was set up and assigned the project name "A OCanada."** The team was set up as a result of information provided by CSIS, which included the names of "suspected terrorists."

**Early October, 2001**

**Abdullah noticed that cars seemed to be following him.**

**October 11, 2001**

**Abdullah remembers that sometime in October he received a phone call from Maher Arar who invited him to lunch. They agreed to meet the next day at Mangos restaurant on Bank Street.** While they were having lunch Arar told Abdullah that his wife was pregnant, and they were trying to find a doctor. Arar asked if Abdullah, who had had four children in Ottawa, could recommend anyone. After lunch they went to Future Shop to buy a printer cartridge before they went their separate ways.

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, this took place on October 11, 2001 and this was the first time Arar came to the attention of A OCanada.

**October, 2001**

**Abdullah believes that it was some time in October that he decided to confirm his suspicions about being followed by pulling to the side of the road and turning his lights off.** The two cars that had been following him sped by, and seemed to be frantically searching for him, driving around the block while Abdullah watched.

**November, 2001**

**It was around this time that Abdullah noticed that he was now being followed in a conspicuous way** by as many as five or six vehicles at a time. He and his family were followed everywhere they went. Abdullah's wife, Khuzaimah, noticed that she was being followed as well by up to two vehicles at once. The family also noticed that **a camera was installed across the street from their home,** and that anyone who came to visit would be followed when they left.

**October 30, 2001**

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, this was the day that an investigator from "A" Division in OCanada, obtained a copy of Arar's lease and rental agreement, without a warrant, from Minto Developments. Abdullah was identified as an emergency contact on the lease.

**November 12, 2001**

Ahmad El Maati was detained by Syrian officials when he arrived at the airport in Damascus at about 3:00 p.m. **He was later questioned about Abdullah and Arar.**

**November 27, 2001**

**Abdullah left for Malaysia.** He and his family were feeling harassed by being followed, and were uncomfortable with the discrimination against Muslims after the September 11 attacks. They had not been to Malaysia since 1996, and were concerned about his wife's mother, who was ill, and decided to spend several weeks there and return at the end of December.

**November 28, 2001**

Khuzaimah left for Malaysia with the four children. She joined Abdullah in Amsterdam and continued on with him to Malaysia.

The Almalki family later learned that sometime soon after they left, the RCMP went to the home of the owner of the travel agency that had sold the Almalki family their tickets. They told him that his company had processed a credit card charge and they wanted to know what it was for. He gave them the details about their travel itineraries. They did not have a search warrant.

**November 30, 2001**

Abdullah and Khuzaimah arrived in Kuala Lumpur and when they went to pick up their luggage, the bag containing the family's desk top computer had not arrived. The bag arrived in Malaysia a week later.

They would later learn that the bag was searched, and the hard drive on the computer copied. The Information to Obtain prepared by RCMP Corporal Randy Walsh for the search warrants executed almost two months later on January 22, 2002, has been released in differently redacted versions by the Arar Commission. It reveals on pages 52 and 63 that **the RCMP may have illegally seized the luggage and computer at Dorval Airport, before applying for a search warrant on November 30 to copy the hard drive.** On January 6, 2004, Randy Walsh emailed Khuzaimah the notice for the search warrant for the luggage and asked her to confirm that she had received it. She talked to a lawyer, who advised her not to confirm because it was odd that they were sending this two years after the fact, and while she was still in Malaysia.

**Early December, 2001**

Abdullah was told by a family friend in Malaysia that he had been questioned by Malaysian officials about Abdullah and his business. This man was told that Canadian officials had told Malaysian intelligence officials that Abdullah had sold equipment to a Pakistani company which dealt with the Pakistani army and that the equipment was later found in Afghanistan. Malaysian officials had responded that if Abdullah's company had sold equipment to a Pakistani company that this was a legitimate business transaction and that he was not responsible for what that company did.

**January 4, 2002**

Abdullah and Khuzaimah found out in Malaysia that there were complications with her pregnancy, and they decided to change their plans and stay in Malaysia for the birth. Abdullah believes it was January 4 when he travelled to the Singapore border for a day to renew his visa, as the one he had received in November would expire in February, around the same time the baby was due.

**Abdullah was travelling on a bus back into Malaysia, and at the border, disembarked with the other passengers to clear immigration. Abdullah was pulled aside by Malaysian immigration officials.**

The bus driver waited for Abdullah for about twenty minutes before he left, and Abdullah was taken to a police station and questioned by five men about when he would be returning to Canada, his religion, and his business. When they stopped questioning him, he asked if he could leave, and they said that the "regional chief" wanted to see him first. The regional chief, whose badge identified him as "Mr. Tan" came in and asked the same questions again. While he was questioning Abdullah, he seemed to be getting the questions and sharing the answers with someone on the phone. When he asked Abdullah if he was travelling back to Canada, he said yes, he had a return ticket.

When Abdullah expressed his anger at being stopped and questioned, **Mr. Tan told him not to blame the Malaysian government, because the Canadian government had asked them to do this.**

Abdullah asked how to prevent this from happening again, and they told him that he needed to go to the Malaysian intelligence services office in Kuala Lumpur to clear his file. They gave him his passport with a three month visa, and helped him find another bus to get home.

Back in Kuala Lumpur, Abdullah asked the family friend who had been questioned about him to help him find out how to deal with the intelligence services and clear his file. He learned that Canadian officials had asked the Malaysian officials to detain him and they had refused, having found that he had done nothing wrong.

**January 22, 2002**

**The RCMP execute a search warrant on Almalki's parents' home, where he was living.** According to evidence and documents at the Arar Commission, the information to obtain this search warrant relied upon reports and letters received

from RCMP from CSIS. Much of the ITO referred to a "suspected sleeper terrorist cell" operating in Canada.

The RCMP also went to the homes of Abdullah's three brothers in Ottawa and London, Ontario in the very early morning.

Abdullah's eldest brother was escorted by the RCMP from his residence for questioning at 7:30 a.m. He asked if he needed a lawyer and the officer told him he did not.

Abdullah's youngest brother, Youssef, was visited at his London, Ontario apartment by RCMP officers from the anti-terrorism squad at 7:30 a.m. They insisted he go with them immediately to answer questions about Abdullah and his family history. Youssef stalled them and went to Assistant Dean of Medicine's office, who advised him to obtain legal counsel. With legal counsel present, the RCMP questioned Youssef about his medical studies, and whether he received gifts from his brother. The RCMP told Youssef that they were questioning him because they suspected that Abdullah had sold computer equipment to companies in Pakistan, which had in turn sold it to others, and that the equipment eventually made it into the hands of terrorists. Youssef's lawyer pointed out the absurdity of the accusation, and the RCMP officers just shrugged. When asked, the officers admitted they had no evidence that Abdullah had knowingly done what they had said.

Abdullah's third brother asked to have a lawyer present and the RCMP decided not to question him.

The RCMP also visited the homes of Abdullah's extended family telling some of them that they had solid evidence that Abdullah had intended for equipment to end up in the hands of terrorists.

**RCMP Captain Erika Sheridan** and another woman who would not identify herself, told Almalki's cousin that they had confirmed that Almalki was al-Qaeda, and asked if she thought Almalki would go to Syria. Almalki says she would not have known.

**Abdullah's parents were in Syria at the time that their home was searched. When their sons arrived at their home, they found it ransacked,** with dresser drawers emptied and their contents strewn around the rooms, lighting fixtures taken apart and picture frames broken. The RCMP had seized numerous items, including photos, video and audio tapes, address books, CAA maps, expired passports, tax documents, computers, computer games, CD's, floppy disks, business correspondence, business cards, bills, high school notebooks, Syrian Military Service deferral documents and filing cabinets.

The officers left an article that Abdullah had cut out on his desk. It was from the *Globe and Mail*, and was entitled, "Review slams CSIS treatment of refugees: Spy agency has too much latitude to brand newcomers as terrorists, committee says."

Abdullah learned about the searches from his family in Canada.

## February 2002

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, someone from a U.S. agency visited A OCanada's offices to review information about Arar. Arar's lease may have been handed over at this time.

## April 2002

Khuzaimah and the baby were doing well, so Abdullah decided to travel to Singapore and then to Saudi Arabia for business. **He bid his family farewell, not realizing he would not see them again until two years and two and a half months later. His youngest son was one and a half months old at that time.**

Abduallah had heard from his parents that his grandmother in Syria was ill. His parents were in Syria with her, and several other family members were travelling there to be by her side. Abdullah had not been to Syria since he left as a teenager, and decided to travel there to see his grandmother and parents, and in addition, set up some business meetings. His parents checked that travelling there would be safe for him, ensuring for example, that Syrian authorities were aware that he had legally deferred his military service. They told Abdullah everything was fine.

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, A OCanada put its entire database onto three CD roms and gave them to two U.S. agencies without conditions or caveats.

## May 3, 2002

**Abdullah arrived at the Damascus airport at about 4:00 p.m.**

He was travelling with his Canadian passport, the only passport he ever used after becoming a Canadian citizen. Abdullah's mother was excited that he was coming back to Syria for the first time since he had left to move to Canada. She arranged for him to be greeted as a VIP and taken to meet her at the VIP lounge. He arrived at the lounge where his mother was waiting and they embraced. An immigration officer came in to check his name and asked for his family's names. Then he asked Abdullah to go with him to speak with an airport security officer.

**Abdullah followed the officer, not realizing he would not be returning to her.** Officials at the airport told his mother that they would tell her later what was happening and she had to

leave. Abdullah's family started working in Syria to find out what had happened and to secure his release. They were told that it would not be long, and that Syrian authorities had had to act on information from abroad.

Abdullah went into an office where there were three officers. The man who seemed to be in charge asked Abdullah for his Syrian identification card. Abdullah explained that he did not have one, and asked if he had been pulled aside because he had been away for fifteen years and had not completed his military service. He explained that he had, every five years as required, sent the necessary documentation to defer his service. His current deferral did not expire until March, 2003.

The man in charge responded that this had nothing to do with military service. The men pulled out a report, and the man in charge explained to the others that this was a recent report they had received from what they referred to as an embassy on April 22, 2002.

Abdullah was taken into a detention room, and two men questioned him about his family and wrote a short report. He overheard them say that he was wanted in "branch number 235." He asked what this was, and they responded, the *Far Falestin* (Palestine Branch).

He was escorted by two officers, who said that although they had been instructed to chain him from head to toe, they would not because he did not seem dangerous. They told him he would probably not be long at the Palestine Branch. They knew from searching him that he did not have any Syrian currency on him, and they suggested he exchange his money at the airport so that he would be able to pay for a taxi to leave the Palestine Branch when he was finished there.

They carried his luggage for him and they left in a mini bus and drove through Damascus. Abdullah did not know where they went because he did not remember Damascus — he had not been there since he left as a young teenager.

The van went through two gates as it entered the complex. When they got out of the van, Abdullah tipped the men who had carried his luggage. Everything had been very friendly until then. They went into the building, and Abdullah noticed a blindfolded man with people around him. He was taken into what he later learned was the prison manager's office. The manager was sitting behind the desk and asked him his name.

A prison guard told Abdullah to take what he needed from his bag. Abdullah asked him how long he would need things for,

and the guard told him three days. **He was shocked, and thought to himself that once he was able to speak with someone in charge, they would let him go.** He asked if it was cold in Damascus at this time of year and the guard seemed surprised and told him yes, he had better assume it would be. Abdullah took out a pair of pants, a pair of underwear and a sarong from Malaysia, socks, a fleece vest, toothbrush, toothpaste, a hanker-chief and his Tums and Tylenol. He wanted to take a towel but could not find it quickly enough.

The guard took his lap top, palm pilot and wallet with credit cards and money. The guard wrote down how much money he had in a ledger and stamped it with Abdullah's thumbprint. **Abdullah saw out the window that it was just before sunset. He did not know then that this would be the last time he would see daylight for sixty-six days.**

The guard brought out a blindfold made from a rubber inner tube, and told Abdullah to put it on. He took him into another room.

After a few minutes **some men came in and told him this would not be like Canada and he would not have a lawyer and had to talk.** He asked Abdullah if he wanted to be treated in a friendly way, or in other ways, and Abdullah answered that he would like to be treated in a friendly way. He told Abdullah to sit in a chair and asked him to tell him what he had been doing and was planning on doing in Canada, and why the Canadians, Americans, the British and the whole world were interested in him.

Abdullah started talking but they were not interested in what he was saying and began questioning him. They asked if he knew the Canadian pilot and Ahmad Abou El Maati, and someone named Mamdah or Wadah. Abdullah said he knew the pilot, and that he thought this man was being targeted because he was a Muslim and had a pilot's license. He did not recognize El Maati's name and said he did not know him.

**The interrogator told him he must prefer the non-friendly treatment, and slapped him hard, without warning, across the face. Abdullah had never been slapped in his life, and felt as if his whole world changed at that moment. He realized then that he would not be able to reason with these people.** The interrogator asked him the question again, and again Abdullah gave him the same answer.

He insisted Abdullah knew Ahmad, so Abdullah asked him to describe him. He said he was a big man who was born in Egypt

and Abdullah realized he was talking about a man he knew as Ahmmad Bada, and said so. The interrogator answered yes, this is Ahmad Badr Abou El Maati.

Abdullah was also asked about a man they said was from Iraq and Abdullah did not know him and said so.

The interrogator told Abdullah to take off his jacket, shoes and socks. He told him to lie on the floor with his stomach down, his head on the floor, his hands behind his back and his legs up.

**They lashed the soles of his feet and it felt like they were pouring lava on him.** Abdullah flipped because of the pain and they ordered him to lie back on his stomach. One person stood on his head, the other on his back, and they took turns beating his feet and kicking him with their wooden-soled shoes.

**They questioned him while they beat him, asking if he sold equipment to al-Qaeda** or the Taliban or others, and if he had ever met, communicated with or dealt with Osama Bin Laden or al-Qaeda. They asked what computer equipment he had sold to them. Abdullah told them that no, he had not sold to them or dealt with them in any way, and that he does not sell computers.

The questioning and beating continued, and they would occasionally pour cold water on his feet and legs, and then ask him to stand and jog on the spot before lying on his stomach for more beating. When he was standing and jogging on the spot, **Abdullah saw from under his blindfold what they were beating him with — it was a black, double-folded and twisted cable.**

Abdullah thinks the water and jogging was to ensure he could still feel the pain from the beating. He also learned later that this was to stop his feet from swelling too much.

**The torture continued until Abdullah told them what he knew they wanted to hear — he lied and told them he knew Bin Laden.** They asked from when and where, and Abdullah said from when he worked on UNDP projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan. They asked what his position is in al-Qaeda and insisted Abdullah was Bin Laden's right hand man. Abdullah said no, this cannot be true because everyone knows his right hand man, and they said they had meant to say that he was his left hand man, and Abdullah said yes.

**A few minutes later they accused him of lying, and said that Bin Laden had been in the Sudan when Abdullah was in Pakistan and Afghanistan.** Abdullah told him that he had told

them what they wanted to hear because he wanted them to stop torturing him. He told him he had never met Bin Laden.

**They started the beating again, and told him that now it was “falka,” beating on the soles, and next it would be “dulab” the tire, and then the chair, electric shock and nail pulling.**

They continued questioning him all night about his family, his brothers, and why he had not been in Syria for so long. **They repeatedly threatened to bring in his parents to be interrogated.**

**After some time Abdullah was physically unable to talk, and does not remember much after that, except that he felt someone taking his blood pressure.** The beating stopped after that. They left him on the floor for some time and then brought him a half sandwich to eat. He was later taken to another room where his things were.

May 4, 2002

They took the rubber blindfold off his eyes, and he saw he had blood all over his legs. It was now around dawn on May 4<sup>th</sup>. They told him to take all of his clothes off, and he stood naked as they searched his things. They took his shoelaces away, let him dress, and took him downstairs.

**Abdullah was told later by his interrogators that on his first day there he had been beaten for seven hours and had received over 1000 lashes with the cable.** Abdullah learned later from other prisoners that his treatment had been especially harsh — people are usually only restrained in the tire for thirty minutes at a time. He also learned that they usually only give people fifty lashes, and two hundred if they are especially annoyed.

They made him pick up his things, and he was taken down a long corridor and then a narrow hall with a row of doors on each side. The guard opened the door, told him to go inside, and slammed the door shut.

**The cell was very dark and small. It was about six feet long, 34 inches wide and just over six and a half feet tall.**

It was dark, and Abdullah could not see his wounds. It was painful to sit, stand, or lie on any side. The blood on his feet was sticky and he stuck to the blanket on the floor. He had been beaten on every part of his body, and he hurt all over. Abdullah bundled up his things to use as a pillow. He had been wearing a suit and he put his jacket over him for warmth. Abdullah is usually claustrophobic in small spaces, but at this time,

ironically, he hoped then that the door would never open. **He did not know then that he would live in that cell for the next 482 days.**

A few hours later, in the early morning, **he was taken upstairs again for eighteen hours of interrogation.** They told him they were giving him a rest, but if he did not talk, the next day they would use the *dulab* (tire) and then the chair and electric shock.

He was questioned about everything again, and **for the first time, about his relationship with Ahmad Said Khadr, who they claimed was his link to al-Qaeda.**

May 5, 2002

In the morning of the third day he was taken from his cell to an interrogation room, blindfolded, and told to strip down to his underwear. They brought a tire to him and told him how to get into it. **He sat in the tire with his back on the floor, and the back of his neck against the inside of the tire. His arms were around the tire. They raised his legs up so his weight was on his back and he was completely restrained. They started beating him on the soles of his feet, head and body, and also struck him on his genitals.**

While they tortured him another man was asking questions and writing the answers. They **questioned him again about Khadr,** and asked about all the Muslims he knew in Canada. Then they told him he must be hiding something because they had been told he was wanted in Canada, and that authorities everywhere were searching for him.

They questioned him again about the Muslim pilot, saying they knew he was plotting another 911. Abdullah told them that this man would never do such a thing, and that if he wanted to crash a plane into a building he would not have worked so hard to get his license. He urged them to check with Canada because as far as he was aware, this man was still there and had never been detained or charged with anything. The torture continued. Abdullah told them what they wanted to hear, that the man had a jihadi spirit.

They asked for his email addresses and the passwords to his email and the passwords for his wife's email. Abdullah gave them his, but did not know his wife's.

Abdullah tried to reason with them, arguing that if he had been wanted in Canada they would have detained him, or the Malaysian authorities would have extradited him. **It did not matter what he said — nothing would stop the beating — if he lied, they beat him, and if he told the truth, they beat him.**

The beating stopped a little before noon, but he was kept in the tire. About an hour later they took him out of the tire and checked his blood pressure and brought him lunch. **He was not able to eat much, and had little control over his body from the waist down.** He was shivering uncontrollably and did not have much energy to move his arms and hands. **The skin on the top of his mouth was almost gone from his screaming, and when they forced him to eat an orange it burned.**

The interrogators left him in the room until coming to question him again in the evening. The interrogator later told him to remove his blindfold, and he saw them for the first time. They started moving his legs, and then helped him stand, a little at a time. He had to support himself using furniture in the room. He started walking, using the wall for support. The interrogator ordered the guards to take him to his cell. He told Abdullah that he was "number three," and that he would never forget that number. He later learned that this was the number of his cell, and his name for as long as he was there.

## **May 6, 2002**

On the fourth day, Monday, they began treating him relatively better, even toning down the verbal abuse. Abdullah told the interrogator he needed some of his things and some clothes, and he replied that that would be difficult, but that he could buy things if he had money. He asked the prison guard to follow up. Later that day the guard came and asked him to write what he needed. The guard later brought him what he asked for, including soap and clothing. They let him wash himself and his clothes.

## **May to June, 2002**

For the next few days Abdullah was taken up from his cell for questioning in the morning, and taken back to his cell at night. He asked his interrogator how long this would last, and he replied a month or two. Abdullah had tears in his eyes and told him his cell was like a grave and he would rather have a real grave than be kept there. The interrogator tried to calm him down.

Abdullah asked him to send him to Canada, where they would see he would not be arrested. The interrogator told him that Canada did want him and that he was Syrian and they would not hand over Syrians to other countries. Abdullah asked how he could prove his innocence from Syria. The interrogator told him not to worry because they verify all the information they receive.

As the days passed the interrogations got shorter, starting at four or five in the evening and ending at eleven or midnight. This continued for about a month. Abdullah became familiar with his interrogators, learning that they were from the terrorism division of the Palestine branch of the military intelligence.

**It was through this period that Abdullah got to know the cell he was living in.** He could not see very much, because it was so dark, but he could tell it was very dirty. The walls were cement, and the floor cut stone floor. The back wall of the cell was covered in condensation, which dripped down the wall and made the blanket on the floor wet. There were two containers for food, one small one and a larger one, a bottle for urine and three blankets.

For the first week he did not have a water bottle and had to drink from the washroom. A guard brought him a water bottle in the second week.

**It was terrifying to hear the guards approaching the row of cells — Abdullah was always terrified that his door would be opened and he would be taken for more interrogation and torture.**

Abdullah was allowed to go to the washroom three times a day, morning, noon and in the evening. The washroom was very dirty. In the beginning they allowed him exactly two minutes in the washroom before yelling at him to come out. The guard would beat him if he took longer. In that short time, Abdullah would try to use the toilet, empty his urine bottle, wash out his food containers, and fill his water bottle. On Fridays he was allowed ten minutes so he could also wash himself and his clothes. By the end of the summer in 2002, Abdullah was allowed five minutes in the washroom, instead of two.

Initially, the washroom had running water for most of the day. Then the water was shut off for longer and longer times, until it was shut off from around noon until 7:00 a.m. the next day. Abdullah had to ration his water very carefully.

The food was limited, and very dirty. In the morning he was given tea, a few olives, and either a spoon of yoghurt, a spoon of jam, a spoon of *Halawa* or one boiled egg. The tea often tasted like diesel or soap.

At noon he was given rice or crushed wheat plus a small amount of vegetable boiled with tomato sauce and a piece of fruit. Twice or three times a week he received a very small

portion of chicken in diluted yoghurt and occasionally red meat was substituted for the chicken.

For dinner, he was given pita bread, a boiled potato, lentil soup, a small piece of salad vegetable such as cucumber, green pepper or tomato.

Initially Abdullah ate whatever he was given, because it was so little. He developed diarrhea, and so stopped eating the dirtiest food. His stomach got better when he stopped eating the lentil soup, olives and meat.

Abdullah was afraid to ask the guards to let him use the washroom when he had diarrhea, because they rarely let him go — instead ignoring him, or verbally or physically abusing him. When they refused, he had to use his food dishes as a potty.

**There were rats, some as big as cats, which came in under the door, walked over his legs while he was trying to sleep, and disturbed his food dish. Cats urinated on him through the hole in the ceiling. There were giant cockroaches everywhere, in the cell and in the washroom. The big ones died when it got cold, but a greater number of smaller ones soon appeared. His cell and blankets were full of lice and other blood-sucking insects.**

**Meanwhile, his family in Syria did everything they could to help him.** They held off telling Khuzaimah that he had been detained as long as they could, and when she finally found out they assured her it would not be long, and that he would soon be released. They told her to focus on her health and her infant and four young children, while they worked to help Abdullah. In Canada, his brothers were worried that speaking out might make matters worse.

## June 12 to 16, 2002

On the fortieth day of Almalki's detention, he was taken upstairs, blindfolded and put in a room. He heard the voice of someone new along with the usual interrogator. He later learned that the new person was George Saloum, head of the investigation team. His rank was "moukadam" signified with an eagle and one star. He was later promoted to "Aked," signified with an eagle and two stars.

**Abdullah would later learn that Saloum would later be one of Arar's interrogators as well.**

He asked Abdullah very specific questions about around twenty people in Canada, some of whom he knew, including **Arar and Helmi Al Shareef**. They took a brief summary about what he

knew about/how he knew each person he did know. They asked him about an organization he had not heard of. He does not remember the name, except that it had an “h” in it because they could not pronounce that sound. They took his blindfold off so he could see the name, which was written in English, and he saw Saloum’s face for the first time.

He was questioned about his family bank accounts. They asked if he had accounts in Switzerland, which he did not.

They asked about some of the companies he had dealt with. He was asked how exactly he made sales — about every step of the process from when he was asked for a price quote to when equipment was delivered. Abdullah remembers that he had to write about this process several times over the next eight months.

They asked about trade names he had used. Some of the names were ones he had registered in Ontario and which he had unsuccessfully tried to register as corporate names with Industry Canada. **Abdullah realized that their information could only have come from the company records seized by the RCMP when his office was searched in January.**

They also kept referring to his brother’s company as his, and Abdullah kept correcting them.

Saloum was friendly with him, saying at one point that he wanted to finish so he could leave, because people like him did not belong there.

He was questioned and re-questioned. He asked what they had against him and **they showed him the first lines on the report which said that he was not just a regular member of al-Qaeda, but an active member.** He told them again that this was a lie, and that he had never had anything to do with al-Qaeda.

On the forty-fourth day the lead interrogator came to his cell and seemed to be in a hurry, asking him questions even as they went up the stairs to the interrogation floor. He wrote the answers down quickly and sent him back to his cell.

The morning of June 16<sup>th</sup>, he was called up for more questioning. The interrogator asked how long he had been there. Abdullah told him it had been forty five days and the interrogator responded that he would see the summer sunshine. Abdullah asked which year, and he said this year.

**July 7, 2002**

**Abdullah received an unofficial visit from a relative in Syria.**

His family had worked with Syrian officials to secure the visit. It lasted for about fifteen minutes. The prison manager was there. Abdullah believed he would be released and did not want to jeopardize that so said that he was well treated. His relative told him to be patient, as this was an international issue. Abdullah asked his relative to push the Syrians to hand him over to the Canadians, because he had done nothing wrong. His relative told him that he had been told that the Canadians wanted Abdullah to be sent to Guantanamo. Abdullah's family in Syria did not tell his family in Canada about this and future visits because they were concerned the visits would stop and he would be completely cut off from the outside.

**July 8, 2002**

Abdullah was taken out into an outdoor courtyard. **This was the first time he had seen the sun since he had arrived at the Palestine Branch more than two months earlier.**

**He noticed that his skin was turning yellow, and he was covered in lice bites. He could not believe how much his body had deteriorated.**

He took his blankets with him and lay them on the ground in the sun. This was the first time he was able to see what they looked like and how dirty they were. There was yellow and black mould growing on them. He started walking, and then tried to run, around the yard, but kept stumbling. He was not able to open his eyes fully because of the glare and could barely see. Once his eyes had adjusted, he looked up at the sky and saw a Jasmine plant above the fence, and remembers marvelling at how beautiful it was. He was kept there for twenty minutes before being taken back to his cell. It took his eyes an hour to adjust enough to see again in his cell.

He was taken up for more interrogation that evening. There were two senior interrogators there from the terrorism division. They had a print out of his interrogation report, and it had comments and questions written with a pencil on it.

One of the questions was whether the pilot had taken terrorism training. Abdullah told them that he did not know about terrorist training or if he had taken it.

They told him it did not matter if he knew or not, and that they were just trying to finish the report so he could get out of there, and their boss wanted it by 9:30 p.m.

Abdullah tried to say again that he did not know and therefore could not say.

Other prisoners told Abdullah that once the report was printed out and sent to the branch director, it would take about four days to two weeks to come back from the military intelligence headquarters, at which time prisoners were usually released.

**July 17, 2002**

**Everything seemed to change in mid-July. Abdullah was called up again for interrogation on the evening of July 17.**

He was told to put on the blindfold and was led into a room. The interrogator started calling him names and slapping him across the face, saying he had lied to them and asking him why. He was then told to go back to his cell.

**July 18, 2002**

In the morning of the next day he was called up again and taken into an interrogation room. Two or three interrogators started calling him names and slapping him on the face. **They ordered him to stand on one leg with his hands up. Every time he lost his balance they beat him.** This continued until mid afternoon.

Then Saloum came in with five or six interrogators. **Saloum slapped him on the face and asked why he had lied to him.** Abdullah told him he had not lied, and Saloum left the room.

**They blindfolded him and started beating him.** He told them he had told them the truth and everything he knew and they kept slapping and punching him in the face. When one got tired the other took over. **This went on until Abdullah heard a loud ringing in his ears and fell.** They made him lie stomach-down with his legs up and beat the soles of his feet and all over his body with the metal cable as they had on the first day.

He heard them say that Saloum would be back at seven and wanted to see blood. **They did the same as the first day, beating him and then pouring cold water on him and making him jog, and then beating him again. It continued until he was not able to talk very much.**

They asked him about funding Bin Laden and terrorist training in Afghanistan. He told them he had taken training, so they would stop the beating. They asked him at which camp. They had listed the names of camps earlier and he hoped he remembered one of the names correctly, and gave it to them. They stopped the beating and asked him to stand. They asked who was with him and who had trained him, and he said he did not remember. They said that someone named Abou Ahmad had trained him and Abdullah said yes. They asked him who else was with him, and he said that they would have to fill in the details because he had only told them that to stop the beating. Abdullah felt that he

had given up, and was not in any mental or physical shape to make anything up.

**Saloum came in and told him he had orders to beat him until he needed to be hospitalized.** The others told Saloum that he had confessed to training, but had told them afterwards that he only said that to stop the beating. The questioning continued and they told him he would not be allowed to sleep or rest for three days, and that he would be tortured until he told them the truth.

Later that night they left him for a couple of hours to rest. **It was hard to rest, because his mouth and legs were bleeding, his ears hurt and he was aching all over. He felt like an animal waiting to be slaughtered.** He thought up a list of names that he could use if they asked him who was in the camp.

The next morning the torture started again. He was asked to stand on a step with his back to the wall, and to hold his arms over his head and hold onto a metal window frame. **They would push his legs of the step, and then beat him if his hands let go and he fell. He fell several times.** He was less and less able to stop himself from falling, and his fingers were sore and bleeding. It soon reached the point where they would prop him up, but as soon as they let go of his legs he would fall again.

**Then they tied his hands together with a cloth around the metal frame so he was suspended from it.** They questioned him until he could not talk or even move his lips. **Abdullah remembers that this questioning was about Khadr.** They eventually untied him and he fell to the floor. They started beating him on his back. He does not remember much of what happened next, or if anyone took his blood pressure. He remembers later that he was sitting on the floor and realized he could not move or feel his hands.

**The interrogators told him that they had planned to release him until they had received a new report.** They continued questioning him, beating him with a belt and the cable, making intimidating statements and threats, and insulting him until the late afternoon of July 21<sup>st</sup>. Then he was taken up every second or third day for interrogation. The tone continued to be very intense, with threats of more torture, the threat that they would bring in his parents.

They also told him that they knew Afghanistan well, and that there was no camp with the name he gave them, so he had better tell them the truth.

During this time Abdullah saw the report they had received. Abdullah could see that it said that a search of his parents' home had turned up weapons and proof that he was an aid to Bin Laden and a high-ranking member of al-Qaeda.

**July 29, 2002**

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, the RCMP were in contact with James Gould of DFAIT ISI regarding seeking access to Abdullah through consular channels in Damascus.

**July or August, 2002**

**One day, when he was on the interrogation floor, he saw a young boy, maybe seven or eight years old, taking his sister to the washroom,** and it broke his heart. When he first arrived, he learned of an older woman being in the cell. Later he heard women and children from his cell, which shared a wall with their cell. Up to twenty women and ten children were kept at a time in a five by five metre cell. He could hear the women coming back from being tortured, and crying. He could also tell from the guards' questions that the children as young as his own. **The presence of these young children in such a horrible place, with their exhausted and drained mothers, still haunts Abdullah.**

**Abdullah listened very carefully to their voices, constantly worried that his wife and children had been lured into coming to Syria, or that his interrogators had carried through on their threat and detained his mother.**

**August, 2002**

Members of Abdullah's family in Canada met with Senator Terry Stratton to discuss Abdullah's case and ask for his help. Soon afterwards, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) sent a diplomatic note about Abdullah to the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**August 12, 2002**

According to documents released at the Arar Commission, El Maati received his first consular visit since being detained — he is now being held in Egypt. **El Maati told Canadian consular officials that he was tortured with electric shock while he was in Syria,** and that he believed CSIS was responsible for his detention. Documents also show that Project A O Canada was informed and discussed media lines around what he said.

**August 24 to 25, 2002**

On the morning of August 24<sup>th</sup>, Abdullah was taken upstairs, blindfolded, and taken immediately into an interrogation room.

**He was told to lie on the floor again, and they started beating him with a cable, this time all over but especially on the soles and tops of his feet, and on his head and hands.** Abdullah later lost the feeling in the top of his feet for some time and thinks the nerve may have been damaged.

That evening a number of interrogators came and started questioning him about Malaysia, and his wife and her family.

The next day, on August 25<sup>th</sup>, **a guard told him to clean himself and get ready because he was going to be released.**

Saloum came to look at him and called him names and told him to put on better pants. He told the guard to get him belt and laces for his shoes. They handcuffed him and put him in a car with Saloum and the prison manager. They followed another car. In that car was Saloum's boss, an *Ameed*, a rank signified by an eagle and three stars.

He was taken to what he later learned was branch 111, the Information Branch. They had forgotten his blindfold, and called the Palestine Branch to have someone send one.

Once in the building, they made him stand, blindfolded, in a hallway for about an hour. They took him into an office. A number of people came in and the *Ameed* from the Palestine Branch instructed him to answer questions in Arabic, and to answer after they translate. He could see from under his blindfold that Saloum was writing.

They started asking questions in English and they were translated into Arabic by the Syrian interpreter. Their first questions were about his wife, her post graduate studies, when he had been in Malaysia and where he had stayed and went, and who he knew there. They asked why Abdullah and his family did not live in Malaysia, and Abdullah said that he likes staying there but that his family's life is in Canada. Abdullah believes that the people asking the questions were from Malaysia.

Then the *Ameed* told the guards to take him out of the room. He overheard the *Ameed* telling the translator that they did not have much time and should get to the important questions. The guard noticed that Abdullah was close enough to the door to hear them, and took him further away.

When he was taken back into the office he was asked about his company, and about the time he worked in Pakistan. He told them about his company and about the UNDP project he had worked on in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

There was a table between Abdullah and the man asking the questions. **Abdullah could see from under his blindfold that there were two reports on the table, one in English marked secret, and the other in Malay.**

The man was speaking to Abdullah as if he were a member of al-Qaeda, so Abdullah told him he was not a member, and was not responsible for what they believed or did. The man seemed surprised that it was not established that he was from al-Qaeda, and asked him if he was again. Abdullah told him again that he was not and did not share al-Qaeda's ideology.

As the meeting was drawing to a close, and others were talking, Abdullah asked the Malaysian man why they had not interrogated him while he was in Malaysia. The man answered that they had not been interested in him until after the Syrians detained him.

After the meeting Abdullah told his usual interrogator that he suspected that these people had been sent to question him by the Canadians who may not have believed what the Syrians told them he had said. **The interrogator told him that the Canadians had been asking to interrogate him directly.** He said that headquarters had refused the Canadian request but that the decision was not yet final.

**It was around this time that Abdullah noticed he could count his ribs, and had lost between forty and fifty pounds.**

**September 26, 2002**

**Arar was detained by American officials at JFK Airport in New York.** Officials from the New York Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations questioned him about Almalki, El Maati and others.

**Sept. 30 to Oct.7, 2002**

**On the evening of September 30, Abdullah was taken from his cell to an interrogation room where Saloum and about five other interrogators were waiting to question him about Arar.** His last name was incorrectly translated and Abdullah did not know who they meant. They asked him to tell them everyone he had ever known with the name Maher. When he got to Maher Arar, they said this was the one.

They asked for everything he knew about him. They were threatening him and said they would beat him because he had not mentioned him in previous interrogations. They had forgotten that his name had been on the first list they had questioned him about. They asked Abdullah to write in detail everything he knew about Maher, and then sent him back to his cell, warning that he better not have lied.

The next day he was called up again twice to be asked about Arar. The usual interrogator was there and saw from the file that Arar's name had been mentioned before.

On October 3, Saloum questioned Abdullah again about Arar, and then asked an interrogator to question him and write down what he said. After he read the report he asked if Arar had been in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Abdullah said no, not to his knowledge. Saloum instructed the interrogator to send the report before noon to headquarters, so they could fax it somewhere.

Saloum started threatening Abdullah, accusing him of lying. He said that if he was not from al-Qaeda, then he should tell him that someone else, like his brother, is. Abdullah said again that he did not know anyone in al-Qaeda.

**Saloum told him that Arar would be there soon**, and that if he found out he had lied to him, he would put him in a barrel of excrement, reduce the food and drink he is allowed, and then put him in the chair until he was paralyzed.

Abdullah said he had told him everything he knew and that if he wanted something else, he should give him a blank paper to sign and fill it himself. Saloum instructed the interrogator to torture him until he needed to be hospitalized. Abdullah stayed with the interrogator who told him that by then he knew more about him than his wife or parents, and they had not found that he had done anything illegal, and yet the information from Canada said otherwise.

**Abdullah was questioned again about Arar on October 7<sup>th</sup>.**

**October 8 to 9, 2002**

**According to Arar, he was taken from his cell in New York at about 3:00 a.m. on October 8<sup>th</sup> and soon after put on a plane and flown to Jordan, before being driven over the border and arriving in Syria on October 9<sup>th</sup>.**

**October 9, 2002**

Late that night, Abdullah was called up for more questioning. Saloum and the interrogator asked him again about Arar. He told them everything he knew again. They told him that Arar had a different story. Abdullah told them that Arar must be lying, and that they should bring him there so he could prove it.

They went back and forth between questioning Abdullah and Arar for about two hours before taking Abdullah back to his cell.

**October 10 to 16, 2002**

**According to Arar, it was at this time that he was subjected to intense interrogation and torture and was questioned about** military training in Afghanistan and his relationship with

Almalki. He told them everything he knew about him. **They insisted he saw Almalki in Afghanistan** and Arar said that if that is what they wanted to hear, he would say it. They told him they did not believe him and later made him sign a confession that said he had not known Almalki was in Afghanistan.

### **October 17, 2002**

A OCanada faxed a list of questions to the RCMP's liaison officer in Rome, which included questions for Arar in case he decided to "voluntarily provide statements to law enforcement officials" (Garvie Report, pages 28-29).

The *Globe and Mail* reported:

*Although US officials have provided no rationale for holding and deporting Arar, Canadian sources say an acquaintance of Arar's may have led to his inclusion on a list of Al-Qaeda suspects. According to a well-connected Ottawa source, Arar was friends with a man in Ottawa's Syrian community who was targeted by RCMP investigators as part of a post-9/11 intelligence operation. As a result, Arar was also flagged and was questioned by the RCMP. (Cheney, Peter; "Graham takes on US over deported Canadian," *Globe and Mail*, Oct. 17, 2002: A1).*

### **October 18 and 19, 2002**

On October 18<sup>th</sup> Abdullah was called up for more questioning. He was told to put on his blindfold and then an interrogator came in the room and started questioning him from what Abdullah believes was Arar's interrogation report.

Abdullah thinks he could hear Arar shouting and swearing by God in another room.

They questioned him about Arar the following day as well.

### **October 21, 2002**

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, someone from A OCanada received a call from DFAIT, advising that Syria had confirmed that Arar was there, and that Ambassador Pillarella would be meeting with Syrian authorities. A OCanada offered to share information about Arar with the Syrians.

### **October 24, 2002**

**According to documents released by the Arar Commission DFAIT was contacted by media about Abdullah.**

### **October 25, 2002**

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, the RCMP's media relations and A OCanada informed headquarters that the CBC may have discovered a link between Arar and Abdullah.

**Early November, 2002**

According to documents released by the Arar Commission **Ambassador Pillarella met with Syrian authorities**, who provided a verbal briefing of the results of the Syrians' investigation of Arar up to that point. Pillarella asked for a written report of this information.

**Mid-November, 2002**

**RCMP documents say that an "unidentified Syrian Canadian** man living in Ottawa who had disappeared earlier this year after travelling in Indonesia and Malaysia **also turned up last week in a Syrian jail**, apparently after being arrested in August for reasons not being disclosed by either Syrian or Canadian officials. The unidentified 31-year-old businessman was **apparently arrested on information provided by the RCMP who raided the house he was living in last spring**" (RCMP Hearing Documents, Volume II-211).

**It was around this time, on the first day of Ramadan, Abdullah received his second unofficial family visit.** His relative saw that he was in very bad condition, and Abdullah told him about the torture. The prison manager tried to stop the meeting and Abdullah's relative assured him he would tell no-one about the torture. Abdullah told his relative to tell his parents that he was well. His relative left the meeting very upset and his family later reported what they had learned about his torture to Syrian officials.

Fifteen days later, Abdullah received a food package from his family.

**November 24, 2002**

Abdullah was called up for more questioning in the early afternoon. A new interrogator had hand written papers in his hand. More interrogators came in the room and they started asking sarcastically how he was. **They asked him again about Khadr.** He told them what he had told them before and they seemed to believe him this time. They read from the report and it was as he had told them before — that he had not liked the way that Khadr had managed the reconstruction and relief projects and he had left because of that. They also had a lot of personal information about the pilot's family. Abdullah was shocked at how detailed this was.

Later in December, Abdullah saw the title of the document, which said in Arabic, "Meeting with Canadian delegation of November 24, 2002" It was addressed to head of the Palestine Branch and to the head of the Military Intelligence.

November 28, 2002

Abdullah was taken up for more questioning. Saloum and another senior interrogator seemed to have a new report from Canada. They wanted details about how his company operated, from the initial quote request stage to product delivery. They wanted to know how he shipped from one country to another without the goods ever passing through Canada. They believed this was illegal and he explained it was not. The interrogators insisted he had not filed the necessary documents for these deals, and Abdullah explained that the only documents necessary were tax related.

**The interrogator accused him of lying saying that he had received this information from the Canadian consul.**

Abdullah said that the consul must not know much about international trade, and that they should get a book about exporting from Canada so they would know that he was telling the truth.

The interrogators told him that the serial numbers on equipment found in Afghanistan proved that the equipment had come from him. Abdullah asked for a description of the equipment, and they did not know that information. He asked them to ask the Canadian government for the details, so that he could check to see who he had sold it to.

Abdullah also told them again that he had not sold equipment to anyone in Afghanistan.

They also asked him about telephone calls he had made in Canada.

Abdullah told them they should ask the Canadians for proof of their claims, and **the interrogators told him that he was not supposed to know that this report had come from Canada. Abdullah told them that it was obvious from the questions that these reports had come from Canada.**

They also asked him repeatedly what he had shipped by sea. He found out later that the report said that the U.S. navy was searching a ship in the Caucasian Sea for goods that he had sold to a terrorist organization, and that this would be proof of his guilt. Abdullah pointed out that he had been in detention for seven months now, and could not have shipped anything.

Abdullah also said that if the report said that this would be proof, then it meant they had no proof yet.

The interrogator closed the file and never questioned him about that again. **Abdullah felt that the interrogators were beginning to question the Canadian's credibility.**

December, 2002

**Abdullah was told in December that Canadian intelligence officials were still asking for permission to question him in Syria.**

Abdullah was also questioned around this time about another Muslim Canadian engineer he knew in Canada. He found out after being released and returning to Canada that CSIS had been questioning this man at this time.

**Around the end of December, his relatives returned to check on him again, in another unofficial visit.** This time Abdullah was told to wash and had his beard shaved before the visit. The prison manager ensured that this visit was very controlled — Abdullah was kept at a distance from his relative, and several prison officials. Abdullah asked his relative to put as much pressure as possible on the Syrians to release him. Abdullah was afraid that the visits would stop so he did not talk about torture, but said that he felt like he was rotting.

January, 2003

**Abdullah thinks he remembers being told again in January that Canadian intelligence officials were still asking for permission to question him in Syria.**

Youssef Almalki appeared in court in Ottawa to argue against the RCMP and Crown Prosecutor's application to extend their right to hold items seized on January 22, 2002. Youssef told the judge that the RCMP had told his family that Abdullah would be charged within six months, and this had not happened, and instead, his brother was being held in Syria without charge. The judge ruled that the RCMP could only hold the items for another three months instead of the year they had asked for. He suggests to the RCMP that this might speed up their investigation. RCMP officer Randy Walsh told Youssef that if he believes someone is guilty, he will get him.

January 13, 2003

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, **the RCMP's Liason Officer, D.D. Fiorido, was in Damascus on this date.** His report says that "in both cases, no new information was obtained" (Exhibit P-85, Volume 4, tabs 117-118).

January 16, 2003

Abdullah taken for questioning again on January 16. **His Syrian interrogators had the biggest report they had ever received about him and they no longer tried to hide that the reports had been coming from Canada.**

This report included two long pages of questions. The report claimed that the pilot had travelled to Abdullah's home in

Ottawa, and had telephoned his family overseas from there. They had the phone number. Abdullah told them that he had never known this man to make a long distance call from his home.

The report claimed that Abdullah was linked to al-Qaeda through Ahmad El Maati or the pilot's family in Canada, which was the opposite of what he was originally told (that he was their link to al-Qaeda).

The report also said that he had been to a military training camp in Afghanistan.

**The interrogator told Abdullah that the Canadians told them he was very smart and were implying that he was deceiving them.** The interrogator told him that he and other detainees would suffer much worse treatment if he ever found that he had been lying.

Abdullah sensed from the way he was wording his questions and statements that he had recently met directly with Canadian intelligence officials.

This was a Thursday, which, along with Fridays, were normally very quiet days unless there was a special case to deal with. Later that afternoon he and three other detainees were questioned by this interrogator, each in different rooms. Abdullah could hear the others screaming and begging for mercy and the interrogator looked very threatening but did not physically torture him that day. Abdullah thinks that the others were being beaten just to terrorize him.

## February, 2003

**Abdullah was called up**, not for interrogation, but to ask about his health, which was bad. The interrogator grabbed him and noted how weak he was. **The interrogator told him that the Canadians still wanted to see him but that this was up to headquarters. Abdullah thinks they were checking his condition to see whether they would present him to embassy officials.**

## March 1, 2003

Abdullah was called up and questioned for the last time at the Palestine Branch. He was asked if he used to raise money in Canada for al-Qaeda. Abdullah told him that he had already answered that question and his answer was still the same. The interrogator said that this time was more official.

The interrogator also told Abdullah that the Canadians were still asking to see him, and that other people from the embassy also wanted to see him, but that this was up to the headquarters. He

said that the person from the embassy was a nice man with grey hair, in his sixties. Abdullah asked if this person wanted to question him and the interrogator said no, that he just wanted to visit, and he had seen him many times.

Abdullah's military service deferral expired.

**April, 2003**

**Abdullah was called out of his cell for another unofficial family visit.** His beard was shaved and he was asked to wash. The visit was again very carefully controlled. His relatives brought him some clothes and asked the prison manager what they could do to make his life easier. Abdullah asked for medical supplies but the prison manager told them they would provide everything he needed. One of his relatives was so upset by how Abdullah looked that they had to finish the meeting early.

**DFAIT received their first reply to the diplomatic note they sent to the Syrian MFA eight months earlier in August 18, 2002.** The reply confirmed that Abdullah was in detention in Syria because he had defaulted on his military service. Abdullah's military service deferral had expired just a month earlier in March, 2003, and it appears that they may have waited until that time to reply to the diplomatic note.

Around this time the RCMP successfully renewed their seizure application for another six months.

**June, 2003**

**Abdullah was called out of his cell and cleaned up for another unofficial family visit.** Again, it was very controlled. Abdullah told them he was being treated well. He was still scared that the visits would be stopped.

**July 25, 2003**

The *National Post* and the *Ottawa Citizen* published a front page report by Robert Fife in which unnamed sources say Syrian authorities provided information to the CIA which helped avert an "al-Qaeda conspiracy" to attack the US Embassy in Ottawa. In the same article, Fife reports that Ahmad Arnous, Syrian Ambassador to Canada, says Syria gave "classified information" about Arar to the CIA and CSIS. Fife's unnamed US source says the Canadian government "*knows much more about Arar than they are telling Canadians,*" and "**the RCMP quietly asked the U.S. government to arrest Mr. Arar in New York City and deport him**" ("*Al-Qaeda targeted U.S. Embassy: Syrian tip led to arrest of accused terrorists planning Ottawa attack,*" *National Post*, July 25, 2003: A1).

**August 20, 2003**

Arar was transferred to Sednaya prison.

**August 25, 2003**

Abdullah was called up on August 25<sup>th</sup> and told by the interrogator that he was being sent to a more comfortable place. He told him he would see Maher there.

**August 26, 2003**

The next morning, Abdullah was called up and the interrogator gave him a falafel sandwich for breakfast. The interrogator was very nice and waited in the room until Abdullah finished eating before sending him back to his cell.

**August 27, 2003**

In the evening, Abdullah was called up again and told he would have to sign some official papers. The interrogator had a handwritten report. From that report, he dictated to Abdullah to write another report. **When Abdullah finished writing, he was asked to thumbprint and sign each page. He was also asked to sign and thumbprint another form about his family's names and the report the interrogator had.**

**The interrogator told him that he would be transferred the next day, and then taken to a court, which would order his release, because they had not found proof of any wrongdoing.** Abdullah asked how he would go to court without a lawyer, and the interrogator told him he did not need one, because they did not have any proof he had done anything wrong. The interrogator asked about his military service, and Abdullah explained that he had legally deferred. The interrogator told him not to worry.

**August 28, 2003**

**After living in the grave-like cell for one year, three months and twenty five days, Abdullah was transferred to the Fara'a Tahkek (Interrogation Branch of the Syrian military intelligence).** He was taken there by a driver and two guards. When they arrived the guards started insulting him, using swear words Abdullah thinks they must have learned from English movies. He was taken underground to interrogation rooms. They left him there until about 10:00 p.m., when they came and took his belongings, which included his toothbrush and toothpaste. They took his eyeglasses, saying they were forbidden, and took him to room number 12.

**The room, about five by five metres and was packed with more than twenty five people.** Each person had a space about twenty centimetres wide, and so when it came time to sleep, everyone had to lie on their sides and could not move.

He met a man there named Nouras Ramadan, who had been brought from Sednaya for a few days. He told Abdullah about another Canadian man, Arwad Al Boushi, who was being kept there.

September, 2003

The RCMP renewed their seizure application for another six months, over one and a half years after the search warrant was executed.

September 6, 2003

After spending ten days at the Interrogation Branch, Abdullah was transferred in a bus with four other prisoners, including Mr. Ramadan, to the Sednaya prison.

When they arrived the prisoners were lined up against a wall, and their identification was checked before they were each called. The jail officer called Abdullah and asked him for his name, personal information, and what he had been accused of. Abdullah told him he had been accused of being a member of al-Qaeda but that the intelligence had cleared him of all charges and he was supposed to go to court and then be released.

The man replied sarcastically that yes, that was why they had sent him there. **He told Abdullah that what that really meant was that they had not known how to make him confess, but that once they hook him up to electricity and do their work he would confess.**

The other inmates told him not to worry, and that this was just a threat. The guards took the prisoners to the second floor. Abdullah was so frail that Mr. Ramadan, who was more than 60 years old, had to help him carry his bags up the stairs.

They took Mr. Ramadan and the other older prisoner to another wing, and left Abdullah and the other two in a big hall for about an hour. A number of soldiers came in with their commander. Another commander came in the room and said that Abdullah could not keep his bag with him, as there would be no room for it. He told Abdullah to take only what he needed in a small plastic bag. He only had a few seconds and was not able to grab a full set of clothes. A soldier told him to take socks because it is cold there.

After another hour, more soldiers came in and were ordered to shave the prisoners' heads. One man, whose first name he would later learn was Mouhanad and whose rank was *Rakeb*, ordered the man shaving their heads to jam the hair in the manual shaver and then pull the hair out. This was very painful and the prisoners were left with patches of hair on their heads.

They left the prisoners with a guard for some time before returning and starting to beat them, one by one. They started with the oldest, a 59 year old man. They started shouting at him and calling him names and then slapped him hard on the face, which threw him several feet away on the floor. They asked him

to get up and then did it again. **Then they made him lie on his stomach with his feet up and beat him on the soles of his feet with a wide, thick, long belt.** Abdullah could not watch and turned away.

**They did the same with the second man, and then turned to Abdullah.** They started slapping his face and kicking him. Mouhanad asked him what his citizenship was and he told him he was Canadian. He ordered him to lie on his stomach with his feet up and the other men started beating the soles of his feet. When they finished, Mouhanad said he would like to do some himself, and continued the beating.

**This was different than what Abdullah had experienced before — the torture was short and intense and they did not want information.**

When they were finished the men told the prisoners to keep their heads and eyes down and walk. They were taken down a level, and then down some more narrow stairs to metal doors that looked like an opening to an underground hole. The doors were opened and they were taken into a space with poorly lit rows of cells. They put each man in separate cells. Mouhanad asked Abdullah if they had hotels like this in Canada. The cells were empty, and Mouhanad ordered the soldiers to get each prisoner a gallon of water, four blankets and a pillow.

**The cell was about five feet by five feet wide and about half of the room was taken up by a washroom without a door, so the cell stunk very badly.** It was dark and dirty.

Abdullah was in a lot of pain so he was only able to clean a small area, and then lay on three of the blankets, folded in half, with the fourth covering him. It was much colder there than it had been at the Palestine Branch.

The next day he started cleaning the washroom. This took four days to do, as **there was feces all over the floor and urine on the walls.**

There was no running water in the cell, so the guard would open the door once a day to trade a full water container for an empty one. Abdullah found another damaged old container in the washroom, which he fixed with a plastic bag, and used to collect dirty water to flush the toilet with at the end of the day. Another prisoner who had been there for one and a half years, gave Abdullah, through a cooperative guard, another good container. Abdullah used this to save a little water each day to wash himself and his clothes with.

The cell was very dark, and the only light that came in through the bars at the top of the door was from a light some distance away in the hall. One of the guards seemed to have some compassion, and brought a bulb closer to his cell so more light came in and he could see more.

**Abdullah agonized over his situation — what he would do if it got colder, what he would do when he ran out of the little soap he had, and if he would ever get out of this cave. It was very, very quiet and he felt like he was “behind the sun.”**

**September 17, 2003**

On September 17<sup>th</sup> he was taken out of his cell and transferred to a wing of the prison. He was taken through metal doors, and along a long hallway that had daylight coming in through windows on the side. The soldiers opened a door and he went into the wing.

When he got inside many other prisoners surrounded him, asking who he was, where he was from and what he had been accused of. Then **he saw Arar, who took him into the cell he was staying in.** The people in the cell took his clothes to clean them and prepared hot water for him to take a bath. He told Maher how he had been treated.

The cell was very clean — the prisoners kept things very clean there so they would not get sick.

**Late September, 2003**

**Abdullah received another unofficial visit from his relatives.** He was feeling very hopeless, and thought he would never be released, and during the visit he risked speaking openly to his relatives. They were shocked to see his shaved head, and how bad he looked and asked him how he was. He told them that he had been beaten and also told them about the report that had come in April, 2002 and that he knew that a Canadian delegation had been to Syria on November 24. He asked them to tell his brothers in Canada. There were three or four prison officials in the room who were outraged that he spoke openly about his treatment, and lied and told Abdullah’s relatives that they had not ordered his beatings.

**September 28, 2003**

**On September 28 Arar was transferred back to the Palestine branch before being released October 5.** Abdullah remembers the guards coming to call Arar and that he was slapped by Mouhanad because he did not move quickly enough. Abdullah remembers the guards coming for his things a few days after he left.

October 2, 2003

The Pakistani army surrounded a house on the border with Afghanistan in the province of Waziristan, where they believed senior al-Qaeda operatives were hiding. After a fierce battle they took several prisoners and pulled the body of **57 year old Canadian Ahmed Said Khadr** from the rubble.

October 5, 2003

**Arar was released and left Syria that night. He returned to Canada the following day.**

October 22, 2003

In the morning of October 22<sup>nd</sup>, **the guards called Abdullah's name and told him to get ready for court.** He and another prisoner were taken to a waiting military car. The soldiers handcuffed them, put them in the car, and they were driven to a building in Damascus. Abdullah was taken into the office of a man in civilian clothing, who was dictating to another man. The man consulted a report and questioned Abdullah about how he knew the pilot and Ahmad El Maati, about his work in Pakistan and Afghanistan and about his export business. He asked why Abdullah had been questioned by Canadian intelligence in Canada.

He told Abdullah that he was a casualty of the West's changed policy toward the *mujahideen* — that the West had supported them before, and now they needed someone to blame.

He asked Abdullah if he wanted to change anything in the handwritten report he had signed. He was afraid to say anything but no. Then the prosecutor asked about the other report, and Abdullah told him that he had been made to thumbprint and sign it without reading it.

He dictated to the man beside him. When he finished, he asked Abdullah to sign and fingerprint the pages the man had written. Abdullah asked him to include that he had never belonged to a political or religious organization. The man dictated that, it was added to the report, and then **Abdullah signed and fingerprinted it as he was told.**

**The man told Abdullah that he was going to report that he was accused of activity and knowing people that would harm Syria.** He said he would study the law carefully to ensure he was fairly treated.

Abdullah was taken back to Sednaya. He described where he had been to the other prisoners, and they told him **he had been at the State Supreme Security Court, and that the man he had seen was a prosecutor.**

October 24, 2003

**CTV News reported that CSIS had received a transcript of Arar's confession,** and that "senior government officials in various departments" told Craig Oliver that Arar "provided information to the Syrians about al Qaeda cells operating in Canada," the Muslim Brotherhood, and four other Canadians: Abdullah, Al Boushi, El Maati and Mohammad Harkat.

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, DFAIT received a one-page brief on Arar from Syria. They had received an informal translation on October 13, 2003 (Exhibit C-206, tabs 593, 614, 618).

November, 2003

Sometime in November, Abdullah remembers **being beaten for smiling.** The wing had ten different cells and each cell had a toilet area and a bathing area. There was very little running water, so twice each day, early in the morning and again at noon, the prisoners would take empty water containers to the door of the wing so they could be filled by the guards. The guards would open the door, refill them, and close the door again. One day, when Abdullah was taking the containers out of the door, he saw the guard that had put the light bulb outside his old cell. The guard smiled at him and congratulated him for having been moved, asking when he had been moved. Abdullah smiled and replied that he had been moved some time ago. Mouhanad was standing a few feet behind the guard, and **when he saw Abdullah smiling, ordered the guard to bring Abdullah to him.**

He started slapping Abdullah's face with all his strength. When Abdullah raised his hands to protect his face Mouhanad shouted at him to put his arms down and started kicking him. Abdullah insisted he wanted to see his commander, and refused to put his hands down.

Mouhanad dragged him into a room, and told him to get on his knees. Several soldiers surrounded him and started kicking and punching him all over his body. He felt as if his eyes would come out.

They went to get their commander. Abdullah thinks that Mouhanad told the commander that Abdullah had hit him. The commander, whose name was Ali, with a rank of *Mousa'ad Awal*, grabbed his ears and started pulling on them, and then slapped his face and called him names.

He ordered the guards to bring the tire, the bar and the cable. They told him to lie on his back with his legs bent so his knees were up. **They put the tire over his knees so his knees were sticking out of the inner rim. They inserted the bar between**

**the backs of his knees and the tire and then turned the bar 180 degrees so that his body was upside down and completely restrained. They started beating the soles of his feet with a belt.**

When they finished the commander said that he hoped he would not do the same thing again.

When he was put back in the wing the other prisoners were very upset and helped him. Some were crying because they were not able to help him. They cleaned his wounds and helped him take a bath. **He had cuts and bruises all over his body, and his feet were punctured all over and bleeding. Abdullah guessed that the belt must have been embellished with nails.**

**November 4, 2003**

**Arar told his story publicly for the first time. He talked about having seen Abdullah at Sednaya Prison, and about how badly he had been treated.**

The Almalki family decided that quiet diplomacy was not helping Abdullah and started talking to media and pushing harder on the Canadian government to help.

Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action about Abdullah's case.

**November 7, 2003**

Abdullah's brothers met with consul Myra Pastyr-Lupul and another official at DFAIT and urged them to work to get the Minister of Foreign Affairs to help Abdullah. They are assured that they will lobby the Syrian government for his release.

**November 8, 2003**

The Ottawa Citizen published the story called "Canada's dossier on Maher Arar" written by Juliet O'Neill.

**November 12, 2003**

DFAIT tells Abdullah's brother Youssef that there was a meeting on November 10, 2003 between Canadian intelligence and foreign affairs officials to discuss his brother's case. Strategy is apparently being discussed with Deputy Minister Jim Wright.

**November 13, 2003**

Abdullah's family sent letters to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs asking for help.

**November 14, 2003**

DFAIT tells Youssef that the Canadian Ambassador to Syria has been instructed to contact the Syrian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and ask that he investigate allegations that Abdullah has been tortured.

**November 17, 2003**

The Ottawa Citizen reports that the Crown wants to invoke Section 38 of the Canada Evidence Act to seal the search warrants executed on January 22, 2002. The search warrants are later sealed, though portions have been released through the Arar Commission.

**November 19, 2003**

DFAIT tells Youssef that Brian Davis, the Canadian Ambassador to Syria, will meet with Syrian Vice Minister Moallem on November 30 to seek consular access to Abdullah. DFAIT also informs Youssef that Senator de Bané is travelling in the region and will go to Syria to meet with the Syrian President, and will raise Abdullah's case.

**December, 2003**

Liberal Senator **PierreDe Bané met with the Syrian President.**

**December 11, 2003**

On December, 11, 2003, **RCMP Assistant Commissioner Ghyslaine Clément, wrote in a letter** to legal counsel Michael Edelson, who had been retained by Abdullah's family, **that Abdullah had no criminal record in Canada, and was not the subject of a warrant of arrest in Canada.** The letter also acknowledged that the RCMP met with Edelson and Abdullah's brothers in November, 2003 and that they had informed the RCMP about their concern for Abdullah's well-being. The letter was requested by Edelson. Abdullah's family took it Syria and presented it to the headquarters of the Syrian Military Intelligence.

**December 19, 2003**

Abdullah's eldest son, then ten years old, wrote to Prime Minister Paul Martin when he took office, asking him to help secure his father's release. The Prime Minister replied on March 4, 2004, saying that he would do what he could to help.

**January, 2004**

Sometime in January, Abdullah was called from the wing and taken to an office. **His mother, father and another relative came in the room, and were shocked at what they saw.** Abdullah was happy to see them and remembers feeling safe because they were there. His parents had applied through the prison to see him, so **this was his first official family visit.** The visit was monitored by prison officials. Abdullah's father said he was hopeful that he would be released soon, and told him he had appointed a lawyer and that a court date had been set for the first week in February. He told Abdullah that he had brought a letter from the RCMP that said that he was not wanted for any crime in Canada. His parents had given the letter to the Syrian authorities. Abdullah did not believe that he would be released.

January 13, 2004

**Nureddin was released** thirty-four days after being detained. Canadian Consul Leo Martel picked him up at the Palestine Branch.

January 21, 2004

**The RCMP searched journalist Juliet O'Neill's home.**

February 8, 2004

**Early in the morning Abdullah was told to get ready for court.** He and three other prisoners were put into a large military truck, and driven to the State Supreme Security Court. They were placed in a cell where they waited for a long time. A court clerk came to the cell and asked Abdullah to sign a paper saying he would officially appoint the lawyer his family had arranged. His father and the lawyer came to the cell. His father was very upset to see his son in chains. When the guard overheard Abdullah address his father as "dad" he made his father leave (they had thought he was another lawyer). After a couple of hours a court clerk came to say that all the **hearings had been postponed**, because the judge had not shown up. They were taken into the truck, and he looked out and saw his father on the street — he was extremely distraught. They were taken back to Sednaya, where Abdullah was told that George Saloum had come looking for him while he was at the court.

February 25, 2004

**Saloum and another interrogator arrived at Sednaya to question Abdullah.** They had a new report with them about a Canadian family. The report contained very detailed information about the family, including women's names, their children and in-laws, and their work. Abdullah spoke with this family after being released and they told him that a family member had been questioned by the RCMP in the U.S.

February 29, 2004

**Abdullah was called again to go to court. When they arrived he was taken to a cell, and then into a courtroom. The judge asked if he used to attend the main mosque in Ottawa,** and whether he used to attend lectures there. Abdullah said yes, he had. The judge asked if he knew the pilot, and Abdullah said yes, and that he had never been charged in Canada. The judge asked whether he had worked for a humanitarian organization in Pakistan, and Abdullah said yes, he had worked for a UNDP funded projects there but had left them to return to Canada. While he was being questioned by the judge, his lawyer came in and asked to stand next to Abdullah so he could hear the conversation. The judge ordered him to the back of the room. The judge asked if anyone in the room had anything to add. A man in a military uniform with the rank of *Aked* (an eagle and two stars) asked if Abdullah still shared al-

Qaeda's views. **Abdullah answered no, that he had never shared al-Qaeda's views, and that people who know him know that he does not follow the Wahabe teachings, and that he does not believe in violence.** No one else had questions.

Abdullah was taken back to a cell. His lawyer came and told him that that he had submitted a request for release to the court, and that they had accepted. He said that Abdullah would be released soon on bail worth SP5000.00 (about CAD\$125) and would have to reappear in court on April 25, 2004.

Abdullah was taken back to Sednaya.

**March 1, 2004**

**Abdullah was transferred from Sednaya to the Interrogation Branch, and then later that day, to the Palestine Branch.** At the Palestine Branch he was taken into an underground cell that was about fifteen by fifteen feet, where up to twenty six people were kept while he was there. There was a window in the wall of the cell that opened into a hole at the bottom of the hallway of the interrogation floor. **They could hear the prisoners being tortured and screaming — it was very clear and loud, as if they were in the next room. Occasionally a person from their cell would be taken up for torture, and they would all hear that person being tortured and then see them when they were brought back to the cell.** The prisoners there had rubbing alcohol that they used to clean wounds.

**March 10, 2004**

Abdullah was called from the cell and taken to the office of the man in charge of his file. The *Ameed* told Abdullah that the whole world had been looking for him and that they had had to investigate their claims. Abdullah told him he had done nothing wrong. **The Ameed said that the Americans and Canadians had been looking for him, and that the Canadians had wanted them to hand him over, but they do not hand over Syrians to other countries.**

Abdullah said that he had insisted from the beginning that he had done nothing wrong so no-one could have evidence against him. He said this was proven by a letter from the RCMP that his parents had brought to Syria from Canada. The *Ameed* did not know about the letter, but said that the Canadians still wanted him. **The Ameed said that if the Canadians had sent a letter, it must have been after the Syrians sent them the interrogation reports which cleared Abdullah of terrorist and other charges.**

He asked if Abdullah would be going back to Canada, and Abdullah said yes. **He warned Abdullah not to speak about anything he would not speak about if he was still in Syria.** Abdullah believes this was a warning not to speak about how he had been treated.

**One year, seven months and ten days after being first detained, Abdullah was released. He was taken to another military building where his relatives were waiting in a general's office.** The general apologized for the fact that Abdullah had not been released sooner. He told Abdullah and his relatives that the Syrians were under a lot of pressure to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. He was told by his relatives that they had given guarantees to the Syrian authorities that Abdullah would not speak to media, and would not leave Syria for a year.

Abdullah called his wife as soon as he reached his parents' home. This was the first time they had spoken since he left them in Malaysia on April 3, 2002. His wife said that she knew that he had to stay there for a year, and that they were arranging to join him and live with him.

Abdullah remembers being constantly terrified that he would be re-arrested while he was still stuck in Syria.

**March 18, 2004**

**Eight days after being released, Abdullah went to the Canadian embassy for help getting his passport renewed.**

Through the security glass, he asked to speak with the staff there. A man came to the window and introduced himself as the consul, Leo Martel.

He asked Abdullah for photo identification, and Abdullah gave him his citizenship card, which he took and photocopied before returning. He started talking to Abdullah through the thick glass window, but Abdullah interrupted him, saying he would like to speak to him in person. Martel left for a minute and then returned and took Abdullah into the embassy and up to his office.

Abdullah sensed that Martel was nervous with him. He asked Abdullah how he had been released and when. **Martel said that he was surprised to see him, and that he had been expecting Al Boushi to be released, not Abdullah.** Martel asked how he had been treated, and Abdullah told him that he had been tortured but could not talk about the details. Abdullah told Martel that he had been warned by the Syrians not to talk about his experience to anyone, and not to talk to media.

Martel told Abdullah that he must tell his wife not to speak to the media, because Foreign Affairs would be very upset if the media learned what had happened to him before he spoke with them about it. Abdullah assured him that no-one would speak to the media.

Abdullah asked if he could help him bring his wife and children to Syria. Martel responded that he could not help with that because his wife was not a Canadian citizen. Abdullah pointed out that his children were all Canadian citizens. Martel seemed reluctant to help.

Abdullah told Martel he needed a new passport because his had expired while he was in prison and Martel handed him a passport application. Martel asked why he needed a passport if he was not allowed to travel out of Syria. Abdullah told him that the day he is given permission, he would like to be ready to leave as soon as possible. Martel responded that they could issue a passport the same day if that happened.

Martel told him that MP Dan McTeague was on his way to Syria and that he wanted to meet with him. They arranged to meet for lunch on March 22 before meeting with McTeague.

#### **March 19, 2004**

Abdullah's lawyer in Canada, Michael Edelson, was quoted in Canadian media confirming that Abdullah had been released a week earlier. No one in Abdullah's family had spoken to the media.

#### **March 22, 2004**

Abdullah went and had lunch with Martel before the meeting. Martel told him that Senator de Bané had had a meeting with the Syrian President in December 2003, and that the president had been frustrated and had told de Bané that it did not make sense that the **Canadians first ask that the Syrians detain people**, and then the Syrians get blamed for doing what they were asked, and then the people get released and the Syrians get accused of having mistreated them. The Syrian president told de Bané that they would therefore not release any more people.

Abdullah went to the Sheraton hotel to meet with McTeague, his assistant, Glenn Bradbury, the Ambassador to Syria, Brian Davis, and Leo Martel.

McTeague asked about the court hearing and explained that they had no choice but to respect the Syrian legal process. Abdullah told him that if the Canadian government requested

that the court hearing be cancelled, that the Syrian President could order it cancelled.

Abdullah asked that the Canadian government help his wife and children come to Syria. Martel said that his wife was not a Canadian citizen, but McTeague asked if she had Permanent Residency status in Canada, because if she did, they could help her.

McTeague asked several times whether Abdullah was planning to speak with the media and Abdullah assured him that he would not because it would put him and his family at risk. McTeague told Abdullah to give him three weeks to try and help get him out of Syria and back to Canada, and that if he was not able to do that within three weeks, that he would come back and refuse to leave without him. McTeague told Abdullah that as far as he was concerned, he was innocent and he would do what he could to help him. He added, however, that what CSIS and the RCMP did was out of his control.

**March 31, 2004**

Amnesty International updates their November 4, 2003 Urgent Action, saying that Abdullah has been released and thanking members for their appeals.

**April 13, 2004**

Khuzaimah went to the embassy in Kuala Lumpur and submitted the application for Zakariya's passport, so that they could travel to Syria. The embassy contacted her to say it was ready on May 4<sup>th</sup>, and she picked it up on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Mid April, 2004**

**Abdullah was called in for questioning at the Palestine Branch.** The interrogators had a new report they wanted to question him about. Abdullah saw that the fax header date was March 29, 2004. **Abdullah wonders why the questions could not have been asked through the embassy, and whether this was an attempt by Canada to have him detained again.** The report contained pictures and names of several people — he only knew one person's name. The report also had the name of a group called the "Prayers Group," and claimed that Abdullah was its spiritual leader. He told them he had never heard of the group, and that he only recognized one name on their list. The interrogators were frustrated, and threatened to bring the tire to torture him again. He told them that none of what was in the report was true. He reminded them that he had been in detention for almost two years and therefore could not be this group's spiritual leader. The interrogators let him leave.

Following the interrogation, Abdullah's family in Canada contacted McTeague to tell him about the report and what had happened.

**April 25, 2004**

Abdullah appeared at the court. His lawyer handed in his defence document to the court clerk. Abdullah was told to reappear on June 6, 2004.

**Late April, 2004**

Abdullah met with Martel and another embassy official for lunch. Abdullah had told them earlier about the report he was questioned about in mid-April, 2004. They wanted to know more about it and Abdullah told them. Abdullah was talking about the need to get access to Al Boushi, and suggested that George Saloum would be a good person to approach. Martel told him he was good friends with Saloum.

**May 11, 2004**

Khuzaimah wrote to Prime Minister Paul Martin to tell him that Abdullah had been taken in for questioning and to ask him to help ensure Abdullah's safe return to Canada. She received a reply on May 31, 2004, saying that her concerns had been noted.

**June 6, 2004**

Abdullah appeared in court, and his hearing was postponed until July 25<sup>th</sup>. The Canadian Ambassador was there and met with a judge for forty minutes. He told Abdullah that he had told the judge that the Canadian government wanted an open and fair trial.

**June 19, 2004**

Khuzaimah and the children left Kuala Lumpur for Damascus, and were finally reunited with Abdullah at the airport. His youngest child was now two and a half years old and did not know his father.

**July 25, 2004**

Abdullah appeared in court for the last time. The Canadian Ambassador attended. The judge reviewed the prosecutor's charge that he was linked to al-Qaeda, and that he was involved in illegal activity that would endanger Syria. **The judge told him he was acquitted of all charges but should be handed over to Military Police so he could complete his military service. After the judge made his ruling, another court official ordered the military police not to arrest him immediately. He told Abdullah to resolve the issue of his military service within two days or they would detain him.** The Canadian Ambassador drove him back to where he was staying in Damascus with his family. Abdullah asked him to contact the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs to explain that the only reason he was in default for his military service was because he had

been in detention. The Ambassador told him he would speak with people in Ottawa about that.

**July 26, 2004**

**McTeague's office contacted Abdullah's brothers in Ottawa, and told them to tell Abdullah to go to the Canadian embassy or the Ambassador's residence and stay there until the military service issue was resolved.**

**July 27, 2004**

Abdullah went to the Canadian embassy on July 27<sup>th</sup>. He told Martel that he had been told to stay there, and **Martel said that this was impossible, because he was a dual national, and this would be disrespectful to Syrian laws.** Abdullah telephoned his brother to confirm what McTeague's office had said. Martel then said that McTeague did not have the authority to do this — only the Minister of Foreign Affairs could order this. **Martel told him he had to leave the embassy by the time it closed at 4:30 p.m. that day.** Abdullah waited in the reception area for his brother to call him back. The receptionist told him he had a call, and it was Curt Petrovich calling from the CBC. Abdullah's brothers had told Curt about the situation at the embassy. They did an interview (the CBC report is available at: [http://ottawa.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=ot\\_more\\_al\\_malki20040727](http://ottawa.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=ot_more_al_malki20040727) ).

At 4:30 p.m., Abdullah was talking with his brother, Youssef, when **the receptionist came to tell him he had to leave, as they were locking up.**

Abdullah left the embassy and did not know where to go. He was too frightened to return to where he was staying, and instead walked around for hours.

His brother Youssef, meanwhile, emailed the Prime Minister to tell him his brother had been refused help by the Canadian embassy.

**July 28, 2004**

Abdullah sought advice from people he knew in the Syrian government. He was surprised to learn that it was their opinion that if the judge had really wanted him to do military service, that he would not have allowed him to leave the court. **They told him that the judge had let him go because he wanted him to leave.**

Abdullah was sceptical, so he had someone check to see if his name was on any lists. He went to immigration to transfer his entry stamp into his new passport. When he went there, they gave him an exit visa. Abdullah went to the head of immigration who signed it for him.

Abdullah finally felt it might be safe for him to leave, and wanted to leave as soon as possible and before his status could be changed. He went to a travel agency and asked for a ticket on the first flight to Europe. The first flight was from Beirut to Vienna, so **he drove fifteen minutes to the Lebanon border, crossed without any problem, and then drove the rest of the two hour trip to Beirut. He caught that flight**, and when he arrived in Vienna, he emailed his wife and told her that he was fine and that he wanted them to leave Syria before anyone found out he had left. He did not tell her where he was because he was worried if anyone knew he had left the country they might be prevented from leaving or detained.

**July 31, 2004**

**Khuzaimah travelled on the first flight out of Damascus three days later on Saturday July 31.** Coincidentally, the flight took her to Vienna, where she emailed Abdullah to find out where he was. Abdullah told her that he, too, was in Vienna, and Khuzaimah got into a taxi and rushed to be with him. The family spent some time together before leaving for Canada and arriving home on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004.