

His Excellency Ambassador Paul Cellucci  
Embassy of the United States of America  
490 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 1G8  
By fax: 613 688 3100

July 4, 2003

Dear Ambassador,

The undersigned organizations are writing to ask that your government take concrete and immediate steps to safeguard the basic human rights of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen who has been detained in Syria without charge or trial for eight months. We are further requesting an opportunity for a delegation representing our organizations to meet with you to discuss the case.

Mr. Arar, who was born in Syria, arrived in Canada in 1987 and has been a Canadian citizen since 1991. On September 26, 2002 he was arrested at JFK Airport in New York City while en route back to Ottawa from a vacation visiting his wife's family in Tunisia. Within 2 weeks he had been deported from the United States and then his whereabouts were unknown for a further period of 2 weeks, at which point Syrian authorities confirmed that he was in their custody.

Your government has not explained why Mr. Arar was deported to Syria last year and not allowed to continue to his country of citizenship, Canada. In our view, the influence of your government in ensuring that Mr. Arar's basic rights are now finally and unequivocally upheld could be determinative. Mr. Arar has not been charged with any offence. There has been no public indication of evidence that he has been involved in criminal activities, including terrorism. Clearly it is well past time for Mr. Arar to be either charged with a recognizable offence and afforded a fair trial, or released. We urge the U.S. government to make a public statement urging Syria to release Mr. Arar now unless he is charged with a recognizable offence leading immediately to a judicial process that meets international standards.

As stated above, a delegation representing our organizations would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further. Please contact Alex Neve, Amnesty International, 613 744 7667 (ext. 234) to arrange such a meeting.

Endorsed by:

Alternatives  
Alternatives North  
Amnesty International Canada (English)  
Amnesty International Canada  
(Francophone)  
Amnesty International USA  
ATTAC-Québec  
Canadian Arab Federation  
Canadian Association of University  
Teachers  
Canadian Auto Workers  
Canadian Centre for International Studies  
and Cooperation  
Canadian Council for Refugees  
Canadian Federation of Students  
Canadian Friends Service Committee  
Canadian Labour Congress  
Canadian Peace Alliance  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers  
Canadian Union of Public Employees  
Canadian Union of Public Employees  
Ontario Division  
Centre for Social Justice  
Communications, Energy and  
Paperworkers Union  
Council of Canadians  
Council on American-Islamic Relations  
(Canada)

Council of Muslim Organizations in  
Toronto  
CUSO  
Development and Peace  
Educating for Peace  
Homes not Bombs, Toronto  
International Civil Liberties Monitoring  
Group  
Montreal Muslim News  
Muslim Community Council of Ottawa  
Muslim Council of Montreal  
National Action Committee on the Status  
of Women  
National Anti-Poverty Organization  
National Union of Public and General  
Employees  
No One is Illegal  
Ontario Coalition for Social Justice  
Opération SalAMI!  
Polaris Institute  
Public Service Alliance of Canada  
Rights and Democracy  
Sisters of St. Joseph of London  
Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights  
Toronto Action for Social Change  
United Steelworkers of America