

COMMUNIQUÉ

QUEBEC'S ATTORNEY GENERAL SHOULD REVIEW DECISION TO RELEASE ACCUSED IN HATE CRIME CASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montreal, June 14, 2006 --- The Muslim Council of Montreal (MCM) and CRARR are calling on Quebec Attorney General Yvon Marcoux to review the decision of a provincial court judge to release on bail a man charged with threatening an imam and another Muslim man with a knife last week.

Yesterday, a Quebec Court judge granted a \$5,000 bail to Pierre Brabant who was charged with four criminal counts, including armed assault and possession of a dangerous weapon, for having threatened Montreal imam Said Jazeri and another Muslim man in front of their mosque. The police and the Crown prosecutor considered the assault a hate-motivated crime; the Crown opposed the release. However, the judge granted bail with conditions that include abstention from alcohol consumption, contacts with the victims and staying 50 meters from the mosque.

CRARR and the MCM are concerned that the judicial treatment of the case will be interpreted as an indication of the judiciary's lack of concern for the physical and psychological security of Montreal Muslims. In light of numerous acts of hate crime and racist incidents against members and institutions of the Quebec Muslim community in recent months, the MCM and CRARR expected the judiciary to send a strong and clear message to all Quebecers and Canadians that Muslims can enjoy the full protection of the law when it comes to freedom from hate and racism. Unfortunately, without imposing a psychological evaluation and interdiction to be near all mosques and Muslim institutions (not just the mosque where the assault occurred), the court risks making Muslims lose faith in the justice system.

"There is no guarantee that this accused will not go out and commit another act of hate-motivated violence against members and institutions of the Muslim community, under or without the influence of alcohol," said Salam Elmenyawi, MCM Chairman.

"The Crown did the right thing by opposing the release because this man represents a menace to the community as a whole. The Attorney-General of Quebec should review the decision immediately to see if the judge's decision is appropriate," Mr. Elmenyawi said.

For CRARR's Executive Director Fo Niemi, "the court's decision can send a very negative message to society as a whole because this is the one time when fair-minded citizens expect the criminal justice system to be 100% on the side of Muslims."

"The Quebec Government needs to affirm its strong commitment to fight hate crimes and Islamophobic and xenophobic violence, especially since despite recent acts of vandalism to mosques and threats and harassment directed at Muslim Quebecers, our political leaders have remained awfully silent," Mr. Niemi concluded.

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