



August 24, 2010

## CSIS quizzes man on Gaza aid mission

By CBC News

CBC News

*A Montreal man involved in organizing a humanitarian aid boat to Gaza says he has received unwelcome attention from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.*

A Montreal man involved in organizing a humanitarian aid boat to Gaza says he has received unwelcome attention from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Ehab Lotayef, an information-technology engineer at McGill University, is a member of Canadian Boat to Gaza, a non-profit group challenging Israel's naval blockade of the Palestinian territory by organizing the delivery of supplies and other aid this fall.

Israel has maintained a blockade of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip since 2007, saying it wants to keep weapons out of the hands of the Palestinian militant Islamist movement governing the Middle Eastern territory.

**'That type of visit is to intimidate us from going [to Gaza].'**-Ehab Lotayef, member of Canadian Boat to Gaza

Lotayef has already visited Gaza twice since the blockade started and has been vocal in his support for the Palestinian cause.

But he says he never had any contact with Canadian intelligence officers or CSIS until this month, when two agents dropped by his Montreal apartment.

"I was actually at work, and my wife called me and told me that two CSIS agents came to the door and asked for me," Lotayef told CBC in an exclusive interview.

The agents left a business card with a 514 area-code phone number, but Lotayef said he ignored the visit and didn't call.

"The first thing that comes to mind is that visit, that type of visit, is to intimidate us from going [to Gaza]," he said.

After the agents paid his wife a second visit three days later, Lotayef contacted the agents. He said they told him they were concerned about his safety and wanted to ensure he didn't get involved with people who could jeopardize the legitimacy of his projects.

Lotayef said he told the agents to leave him alone.

"We might be ready to communicate with community [liaisons] police, stuff like that," he said. "But with CSIS as an intelligence agency gathering information - and I don't trust their motives, I don't trust their way of action - I wouldn't be comfortable under any level communicating with them."

## CSIS claims right to seek information

Lotayef is within his right to refuse to co-operate, said constitutional lawyer Julius Grey.

"You can say, 'This conversation is finished. I'm in my house, please leave,'" said the Montreal-based civil rights expert. "They have to leave. They have no right to be trespassers in your house."

When contacted by CBC, CSIS said security concerns prohibit the agency from confirming it tried to meet Lotayef. But the Ottawa-based intelligence service said it has the right to speak with anyone who may have information it deems of interest.

Ships challenging the Israeli Gaza blockade have drawn international attention in recent months.

In May, Israeli commandos stormed a flotilla in international waters after the ships declared they were delivering humanitarian aid. In a violent confrontation, nine activists were killed and hundreds arrested, including several Canadians.

Israel and the UN are conducting separate investigations into the flotilla raid.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation



CBC News 2010. Permission granted for up to 5 copies. All rights reserved.

You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing [http://license.icopyright.net/3.8471?icx\\_id=/2010/08/24/montreal-activist-gaza-aid.html](http://license.icopyright.net/3.8471?icx_id=/2010/08/24/montreal-activist-gaza-aid.html) into any web browser. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and CBC logos are registered trademarks of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.