

A SOCIALIST ACTION

News & Views

Mohamed Majoub remains in detention

by Judy Koch

TORONTO—Mohamed Zeki Mahjoub won a stay of deportation to Egypt in early September. However, he is still being held by Canadian officials on a “security certificate” for being a possible “threat to national security”. Officials refuse to release any hard evidence to support their suspicion.

Mahjoub was arrested on June 26, 2000 and is being held in the Toronto Metro West Detention Centre. The federal government would like to send him back to Egypt, where he is certain he will be tortured. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration ruled in August 2004 that the “risk” he poses to Canada outweighs concerns for his safety. Even though he won a stay of deportation, he is still being held in jail indefinitely.

Mohamed Mahjoub claimed refugee status in 1995. He is married to a Canadian citizen, Mona El Fouli. They have two sons. He was working as a woodworker and living in Scarborough (the eastern section of Toronto).

While in Sudan he worked for an agricultural company owned by Osama bin Laden. Mohamed left the company over a wage dispute. He says he saw no evidence that this company was a front for raising funds for Al Qaeda, as U.S. spy agencies claim. In any event, he only worked there and wasn’t responsible for where the money went.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (Canada’s spy agency), claims he’s a high ranking member of the Egyptian Al Jihad and belongs to the “inner circle” of the Vanguard of Conquest. Mahjoub denies this. While in jail in Canada, Mahjoub has been horribly mistreated. A guard tried to assault him sexually. Another guard called him a piece of shit and asked another prisoner how he could put up with him. He has been denied Halal (Muslim) food. He was told by a guard that all Muslims should be killed. He asked for medical attention when he had a headache and dizziness and was dragged across the floor into solitary confinement, where he was denied clothes overnight.

The Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services denies these

allegations. Mahjoub developed hepatitis-C and high blood pressure while in jail. His lawyer, John Norris, says, "We see profound similarities between demeaning and degrading treatment that is being meted out both in Iraq and here. There are deliberate efforts to break people down psychologically, and I think that's deeply troubling wherever it's happening." There are other cases of men threatened with deportation to Egypt that have been dealt with by the courts. Two cases involve Mahmoud Jaballah and Hassan Almrei.

Mahjoub should be released from prison immediately and granted refugee status. If he is deported it will make it easier for officials to deport other people or to arrest yet others on security certificates. It is time to put an end to scapegoating and racial/ethnic profiling. An injury to one is an injury to all! The so-called 'war on terrorism' makes victims of us all.

This article first appeared in the October 2004 issue of Socialist Action newspaper.