



## NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
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### **BCCLA DEMANDS IMMEDIATE INQUIRY INTO THE REMOVAL OF BENAMAR BENATTA AND HIS DETENTION IN THE UNITED STATES**

To mark today's three-year anniversary of Benamar Benatta's return to Canada after almost five years of detention in the United States, the B.C. Civil Liberties Association is issuing a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Minister of Justice Robert Nicholson and Minister of Public Safety Peter Van Loan, calling for a public investigation into the Canadian government's conduct in delivering Mr. Benatta to American officials on the evening of September 12, 2001, a week after he had come to the Canadian border seeking asylum.

Carmen Cheung, Counsel for the BCCLA: "The government's accounts to date for how Mr. Benatta was removed to the United States without the benefit of a hearing on the merits of his refugee claim or any other process or procedure are inconsistent and non-credible, and appear to be little more than ex-post-facto justifications for an illegal removal of an innocent man claiming refuge in Canada."

Mr. Benatta alleges that in addition to removing him from Canada without the benefit of a hearing or any sort of procedural due process, Canadian officials also provided to U.S. authorities misleading and erroneous information linking him to terrorist activities. According to Mr. Benatta, as a result of this misinformation, the U.S. authorities detained him for nearly five years.

During his detention in the United States, Mr. Benatta was subjected to treatment which the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found "could be described as torture", and which has been documented in two reports issued by the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Justice. After a series of challenges in the U.S. courts, Mr. Benatta was finally returned to Canada on July 20, 2006. Upon his return, he again sought refugee status, which was granted to him in November 2007.

Grace Pastine, Litigation Director for the BCCLA: "To this day, three years after Mr. Benatta's return to Canada, there has been no indication from the Canadian government that any investigation into the conduct of any of the agencies involved in Mr. Benatta's illegal transfer to the United States will ever take place. We are deeply troubled by what appear to be serious infringements of Mr. Benatta's rights to due process and security of person. Mr. Benatta and the Canadian public are entitled to a full accounting of the government's conduct in this affair."

[Letter to the Canadian Government >>](#)

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