

Terror Suspects Complain of Cruel Treatment

On June 2 and 3, 2006, police in Brampton Ontario made a series of arrests relating to suspected terrorist activity, known as the "Toronto 17." Twelve male adults and five youths were accused of plotting to bomb targets in Southern Ontario and have been charged with knowingly belonging to a Canadian terrorist group, under provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act. The evidence that was seized from the accused included large amounts of ammonium nitrate, a fertilizer that is explosive when mixed with certain ingredients.

Since the arrests, a number of the accused have been detained at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex in Milton and many of them have been segregated from the general prison population in accordance with a court order that forbids the accused from communicating with one other.

On May 7, 2007 the accused requested in court that they be released from solitary confinement. Defence council suggests that instances of prolonged isolation such as this violate section 12 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects an individual's freedom from cruel and unusual punishment. They also suggest that the court order is ineffective given that the accused eat meals together and are transferred to and from the courthouse in the same vehicle.

In an upcoming two-week trial, the accused will challenge the court order prohibiting them from interacting with one another, thereby allowing them to be released from solitary confinement.

Sources:

Terror Suspects Complain of Cruel Treatment The National Post (8 May 2007)

Indepth: Toronto Bomb Plot CBC News (4 August 2006)

Further Reading:

Security Background