

October 16, 2008

To the Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon
Canadian Embassy in Lebanon
Coolrite Building, Jal El Dib
Beirut, Lebanon

Subject: The case of Ivan Apaolaza Sancho

Dear Ambassador,

We are writing as people living in Lebanon who are following the case of Ivan Apaolaza Sancho, a Basque refugee, who will be deported from Canada on Friday, October 17 to face probable torture and imprisonment; unless the Federal Court grants a stay of deportation.

After having followed the development of his case, we feel that it is more than urgent to write you a letter, as representatives of the Canadian state in Lebanon.

Last week, Ivan was informed that he would be deported to Spain, where he is at risk of incommunicado detention, torture, imprisonment and an unfair trial.

Ivan's lawyers have filed for a Federal Court review of Immigration Canada's negative Pre-removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) decision, and have asked for a stay of deportation, but there is no guarantee that the Federal Court will accept.

He was ordered to be deported based on allegations by Spain. However, the government has not supplied any evidence to support the claims that would link him to any crime to the ETA (a Basque armed militant group).

Today, there may be a court hearing in which Ivan's lawyer will argue for a stay. If the Federal Court refuses, there is nothing to prevent the deportation save a direct intervention by federal ministers. This is the basis on which Ivan has been imprisoned without trial for 15 months, stripped of his right to apply for asylum in Canada, and faces deportation to possible torture and abuse.

Friends and supporters of Ivan Apaolaza Sancho have succeeded in making his case one that is known to many internationally, including us here. We will be closely following his situation and will hold both Canada and Spain responsible for any ill-treatment he receives.

Many people will be present in front of the Prime Minister's office and the Canadian Border Services Agency Office today in support of Ivan Apaolaza Sancho, to demand an immediate stop to his deportation.

Since we are unable to be present there, we are writing to you to ask you to do anything and everything possible to communicate with the federal ministers in Canada, in order to stop this deportation to torture. The chance to seek a secure and stable life with no political persecution is a basic human right.

Sincerely,

Tania Tabar - Freelance journalist based in Lebanon.

Sawsan Kalache – Medical student at the University of Balamand.