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Brampton man sues government alleging CSIS harassed him

Article

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A Brampton man is suing the Canadian government alleging Canada's spy agency launched a smear campaign against him, painting him as a terrorist and pedophile because he refused to be an informant.

The recently filed \$10-million lawsuit comes after child pornography charges against Ayad Mejid, 48, were dropped when a Superior Court judge ruled his Charter rights were violated by agents with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

In October, Justice Jane Kelly ruled Mejid was threatened and intimidated into handing over his laptop to CSIS to prove he wasn't the online jihadist they suspected. Instead, the agency says it found images of child pornography — evidence deemed inadmissible because it was obtained under the guise of national security, which constituted a "flagrant abuse" of his Charter rights.

In a statement of claim, filed in a Brampton Superior Court, the father of three alleges he "continues to suffer physically, psychologically and emotionally" as a result of CSIS's "campaign of harassment."

The "innuendo" that he was involved in terrorism and pedophilia "have destroyed Mr. Mejid's reputation, cost him many of his former friends and associations and made him effectively unemployable," according to the lawsuit.

"(Mejid) was respected by the community and (CSIS) wanted an influential person they could use, but you don't get informants by intimidating, harassing and threatening them," said Mejid's lawyer Anser Farooq. "You don't go around telling people, 'Help us or else.'"

Mejid alleges CSIS agents acted negligently, breached their statutory duty, abused public office, intimidated him and intentionally inflicted mental suffering.

None of the allegations in the lawsuit has been proved in court. A statement of defence has not yet been filed. Neither the Department of Justice nor CSIS will comment because the matter is before the court.

Mejid says CSIS agents became obsessed with the idea that he was Abu Banan, an online Islamist propagandist who supported Al Qaeda. He says when they couldn't find evidence on his computer that he was Abu Banan, and when he refused to spy on the Muslim community, the agency turned against him.

To date, the Iraqi-born Canadian citizen maintains he has never engaged in terrorism or associated with any terrorist organization. He also says he has no idea how images of child pornography appeared on his computer but suspects they were planted by a CSIS agent.

According to the statement, Mejid alleges he was "forced" to give CSIS access to his computer about five times between 2005 and Oct. 16, 2007 to search for matters of national security. On Oct. 23, Toronto police arrested him for child pornography.

Mejid spent 39 days in jail, where he was "beaten by other inmates and threatened by both guards and inmates," according to the lawsuit.

Prior to being charged, he was employed as a database administrator and office manager, earning about \$39,000 annually, but since then he has been unable to find work.

Mejid alleges he suffered and continues to suffer loss of income and loss of opportunities as a direct result of CSIS's conduct.



Ayad Mejid of Brampton, Ont. is suing the Canadian government, alleging the country's spy agency waged a smear campaign against him.

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