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Lawyer for man accused of trying to join terror group confident his client will get bail

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Megan O'Toole Apr 20, 2011 - 5:36 PM ET

The lawyer for a Toronto man accused of trying to join a Somali terrorist group says he is confident Mohamed Hersi will be granted bail.

Defence lawyer Anser Farooq's comments came on the first day of Mr. Hersi's bail hearing, which continues inside a Brampton courthouse Thursday. Details of the hearing are covered by a sweeping publication ban.

"In light of all the cases that have dealt with these kind of allegations, I expect Her Worship will be able to fashion an appropriate release term," Mr. Farooq said outside court, referring to the presiding justice of the peace. "We're quite hopeful that will work."

Mr. Hersi, 25, is charged with two terrorism offences, including counselling a person to participate in terrorist activities.

His bail hearing began Wednesday morning, three weeks after his high-profile arrest at Pearson airport. Mr. Hersi was waiting to board a flight to Cairo in late March when authorities swooped in.

Police say this was the first stop on Mr. Hersi's journey to Somalia to join al-Shabab, an al-Qaeda-linked group that was added last year to Canada's list of banned terrorist organizations amid growing concerns about the group's efforts to recruit Somali-Canadians.

As the accused, clad in a dark suit and pale dress shirt, listened to evidence from the prisoner's box, he frequently shook his head. The court was also packed with Mr. Hersi's friends and family members, who declined to speak to reporters.

A ruling on Mr. Hersi's bail is not expected until at least next week.

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