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Canadian Citizen Trapped in Bulgarian Prison Launches Web Site

TORONTO, ONTARIO, Nov. 20 – Coinciding with the beginning of historic mediation over a prisoner transfer treaty between the governments of Canada and Bulgaria, the defense team of Michael Kapoustin have launched a comprehensive Web site making public scores of documents detailing high level government involvement in the case.

After more than a year of contacts by key officials from the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Bulgaria has still refused to comply with its obligations to transfer Mr. Kapoustin into Canadian custody, leading to the unprecedented invocation of Article 23 of the Council of Europe's Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons to initiate mediation.

“For so many years, the family has been told to keep quiet about these injustices while numerous promises to bring Michael home were repeatedly broken,” said international lawyer Dean Peroff, of Toronto-based law firm Amsterdam & Peroff, who began representing Mr. Kapoustin almost two years ago on a pro-bono basis. “The time has come to speak up. We're grateful for the tireless efforts of Secretary of State Jason Kenney, who was appointed as special envoy on the Kapoustin matter, as well as Minister Stockwell Day, and we urge public support for the Canadian government's efforts to protect its citizens abroad.”

Mr. Kapoustin was sentenced to a disproportionate 17-year sentence on trumped up fraud charges by a Bulgarian court in 1996. The new Web site, www.michaelkapoustin.com, details the numerous violations of basic due process and his fundamental rights in the trial, torture, solitary confinement and inhumane treatment in prison, and the irresponsible conduct of some former government officials.

Columnist Don Martin of the National Post wrote in a Nov. 20 article, "If there's any justice left in the sad case of Michael Kapoustin, it will manifest itself through his speedy transfer to the Canadian prison system, where he will hopefully spend mere minutes in a cell before he secures his freedom."

Tracy Kapoustin, the wife of the embattled prisoner who has endured great hardships raising their 14-year-old son alone, echoed Martin's sentiment. "We are not asking for any special treatment, only that the law be carried out and that my husband, the father of our son, be brought back home to Canada where he belongs," she said.

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