

UN Blasts Canada for Expulsion of Mentally Ill Jamaican



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

United Nations, May 22 (RHC)-- The United Nations has strongly criticized the Canadian government for its expulsion of a mentally ill Jamaican migrant, saying the move constitutes "cruel and inhuman treatment."

A UN watchdog said Thursday that Canada's 2011 decision to deport Audley Horace Gardner was in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment," the UN Human Rights Committee said, citing the covenant, adding that the decision left the mentally ill man "without the medical and family support he depended on."

The 18-member committee further called on Ottawa to allow the 52-year-old Gardner to return to Canada where he had lived for three decades, and urged the Canadian government to ensure that the migrant will receive adequate compensation.

Gardner, who was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia in 1993, was deported in August 2011 over what Canadian courts described as "serious criminality."

The UN committee, which is based in Geneva and monitors countries' adherence to the international regulations on migrants, said Canada could not justify Gardner's deportation based on the government's rights for protection of the general public, citing evidence that the migrant's alleged crimes were principally

related to his mental illness.

According to expert reports, Gardner could hardly access medications after he suffered psychotic relapses following his eviction from his home in 2005.

Authorities in Canada had defended the expulsion as legal and necessary, saying it was “reasonable in the circumstances and proportionate to the gravity of the crimes committed, and the danger posed to the Canadian public.”

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