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Anser Farooq, lawyer for one of the former suspects, speaks with reporters outside the Brampton, Ont. courthouse on Tuesday, April 14, 2008.



Qayyum Abdul Jamal listens while his lawyer speaks outside the Brampton, Ont. court on Tuesday, April 14, 2008.

Charges stayed against four in T.O. terror case

Updated Tue. Apr. 15 2008 8:35 PM ET

ctvtoronto.ca

Four more Toronto-area suspects charged in an alleged homegrown terror plot have had charges against them stayed, bringing down the number of accused to 11 from 18.

Staying a charge essentially means it is withdrawn, but the Crown can re-activate it within one year.

The men agreed to sign the peace bonds in exchange for the Crown acknowledging they committed no criminal wrongdoing, CTV Toronto's Chris Eby reported.

The Crown has not explained why it dropped the charges, which is customary in such proceedings.

Jamal, 45, who is twice as old as most of the accused, had been described in court documents as the alleged spiritual leader of the alleged terror group.

He spent 16 months in jail before being granted bail, with 13 of those months in isolation, his lawyer said.

"Certainly as far as I'm concerned ... there should be some form of inquiry as to why this gentleman spent such a period of much time in custody and spent it in the fashion that he did," Anser Farooq told reporters with his client by his side.

"The public should know why it was that 18 Muslim men were arrested and why it went the way it did."

Jamal, who said he was beaten while in jail, said he looks forward to getting back to his life and hopes to go back to school.

"I feel very good. I feel very good and very relaxed," he told reporters.