

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune

US anti-war activist barred from Canada says she is targeted for political views

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TORONTO: A U.S. anti-war activist who has been barred from Canada for two years for allegedly lying by omission when crossing the border says she is being targeted for her activism.

"This has everything to do with the fact that I've been involved in political organizations and have organized anti-war rallies," Alison Bodine said Thursday.

Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board ruled Wednesday that Alison Bodine will not be allowed into Canada for two years because she misrepresented herself by not telling guards she had been turned away before, said adjudicator Marc Tessler. Her political activism had nothing to do with the decision, he said.

Bodine, a 22-year-old from Colorado who attended the University of British Columbia, drove Sept. 10 across the border with Washington state to retrieve belongings in Vancouver, where she was denied entry because guards believed her car loaded with belongings suggested she was moving to Canada.

She then returned to the border crossing several hours later with a friend following in his car, and was permitted entry. When her friend attempted to cross, guards recognized the bags and anti-war literature in his car and seized them. When Bodine returned to retrieve the bags on Sept. 13, she was arrested.

"I've come back and forth to Canada many times and this is the only time I had my car searched," Bodine said. "I had enough politically based material to suggest I was a political organizer and so they politically targeted me."

This is not the first time Canada has barred entry to U.S. anti-Iraq war activists. Ann Wright and Medea Benjamin, both members of the anti-war group Code Pink, have been denied entry into Canada twice because their names are on an FBI crime database meant to track potential terrorists, fugitives and violent felons.

Wright was invited by left-leaning members of Canada's parliament to speak at an anti-war news conference in Ottawa, but was denied entry Oct. 25 for the third time.

"The fact that incidents like this seem to be happening more and more with Canadian security organizations is worrisome," said Jesse Lobdell of British Columbia's Civil Liberties Union.

Bodine worked with the British Columbia-based anti-war group Mobilization Against War and Occupation that organizes rallies and petitions against the U.S. led war in Iraq and other international wars. She said Thursday that she will appeal the ruling.

Notes: