

# Syrian Stowaway's Bid For Asylum Is Weighed

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## **Body**

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The State Department will recommend next week whether a young **Syrian** stowaway who leaped into the Mississippi River and requested asylum can remain in the United States, according to the man's lawyer.

The stowaway, Mohamad Marie, 20 years old, told a hearing officer with the Immigration and Naturalization Service that he wanted to remain in the United States, citing instances of religious persecution, said the lawyer, David Kattan, one of three representing Mr. Marie.

Mr. Marie, speaking through an interpreter, told the hearing officer that he was a Palestinian born in Syria and was a Sunni Moslem, Mr. Kattan said.

Darrell Goff, a Border Patrol agent in Baton Rouge, said Mr. Marie "claims he fears some kind of persecution if he goes back to Syria."

Mr. Marie's lawyers said their client would be held in the Orleans Parish Jail while his case was considered.

Mr. Marie asked for asylum Thursday after leaping handcuffed into the Mississippi River from the Liberian-registered freighter Enard Hope. After Border Patrol agents picked him up, the ship's agent arranged for him to fly to Syria, but he made a commotion in Atlanta and airline officials refused to let him on a plane. He was then returned to Louisiana, officials said.

## **Classification**

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