

San Francisco may aid on immigration for extradition help

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San Francisco: In an apparent exception to its sanctuary protections, San Francisco officials agreed on Wednesday to work with federal authorities to extradite a felony rape suspect from Canada.

The legislation allows the city to notify immigration authorities if Mohamed Ben Azaza posts bail, is acquitted or if there isn't enough evidence to try him. The Department of Homeland Security made the request.

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She said the legislation is not an exception to the city's sanctuary protections because the case involves a defendant who is outside the country and must be brought back to face charges.

Ronen, however, said that if Ben Azaza had remained in San Francisco, authorities would not be allowed to notify the Department of Homeland Services of his status except under narrow circumstances. "We're not creating an exception or changing our sanctuary ordinance," she said. "The difference here is he's outside the country, and we're seeking to bring him back."

The San Francisco Examiner first reported on the legislation. The newspaper reports Ben Azaza was driving for a ride-hailing company when he picked up a female passenger in 2017 and allegedly raped her while she was unconscious. He fled the United States and was detained in Montreal, Canada, in June.

The full board will consider the legislation next week. The Trump administration has criticized San Francisco, California and other jurisdictions for granting protections to people who are living in the country illegally. Sanctuary advocates say communities are safer when people feel comfortable working with local police without fear of deportation.

- AP