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Gerard Kennedy, Member of Parliament
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
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Dear Mr. Kennedy,

Congratulations on your recent election as Member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park. I hope that you are finding your feet and your way in Ottawa as you begin this vital task in the life of our democracy.

As one of your constituents, I'd like you to know that I am among one hundred and fifteen Canadians who have risked going to jail by contributing to a fund to help bring Abousifian Abdelrazik home to Canada.

In March of 2003, Mr. Abdelrazik travelled to Sudan to visit his sick mother on his Canadian passport. He was arrested by the Sudanese government in August and held without charge for eleven months. During that time he was beaten, tortured and visited by Canadian and American interrogators. He was arrested a second time, just before the arrival of a Canadian delegation in October 2005, and held for nine months—again without charge.

The reason for his detention and torture: unsubstantiated US allegations that Mr. Abdelrazik is a high-level al-Qaeda operative; and a chilling Foreign Affairs memo written on December 16, 2006 that reads, "Abousifian Abdelrazik was arrested on September 10, 2003 [words blacked out] recommendation by CSIS, for suspected involvement with terrorist elements." He was placed on the US no-fly list in July 2004, and then on a UN no-fly list in 2006.

Mr. Abdelrazik was officially cleared by Sudan's Ministry of Justice in July of 2006, and again by the RCMP in November of 2007. In April 2008, a top consular official wrote to Mr. Abdelrazik's lawyer, Mr. Yavar Hameed, saying the Canadian government has "transmitted our support for Mr. Abdelrazik's delisting request to the 1267 Committee"—a reference to the United Nations Security Council resolution of that number (co-sponsored by Canada) establishing a no-fly list for al-Qaeda suspects.

Ever since his release in July 2006 Mr. Abdelrazik has been trying desperately to get home, but the Canadian government refuses to issue travel documents. Even though UN Resolution 1267 specifically exempts the travel ban for medical reasons, pilgrimage to Mecca and return to one's country of citizenship. Even though the Sudanese offered to charter a private plane. Even though then-Prime Minister Paul Martin flew through town in a giant airbus with dozens of empty seats. Even though Mr. Abdelrazik found an airline that was willing to flout the travel ban.

Every time a solution presents itself the government throws up another roadblock. Now they say Mr. Abdelrazik must present them with a fully paid-for ticket. But he is destitute, whatever assets he may have are frozen by the UN, and the government will not lend him the money to come

home. Not only that, it has threatened to charge anyone who gives Mr. Abdelrazik money to buy a plane ticket.

And so this is why I'm risking ten years in jail by giving Mr. Abdelrazik twenty dollars to help him by a plane ticket to come home. Because Mr. Abdelrazik appears to be a victim of Canadian-style rendition to torture. Because the Canadian government's refusal to facilitate Mr. Abdelrazik's return home is an attack on his citizenship, and therefore an attack against the citizenship of every Canadian. Because, when I was a Canadian in trouble abroad, a hostage in Iraq, my government claimed me (and assisted my family) in a way that was literally astonishing to me and I remain forever grateful for. Because I know in my bones how important it is to come home. And because I feel a sacred obligation to help ensure the right of every Canadian in trouble abroad to be claimed in the same way that I was, regardless of skin colour or religion or last name.

Mr. Kennedy, as a Member of Parliament I ask you to protect the integrity of Canadian citizenship by calling on the government to bring Mr. Abdelrazik home, and by supporting the one hundred and fifteen Canadian who have risked going to jail for the sake of defending this basic right of citizenship.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

James Loney