

Lawyer says Canadian refused passport in Sudan



Abousfian Abdelrazik is shown in a family photograph broadcast by CTV Montreal.

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A Canadian man who has been stranded in Sudan for six years did not return home on Friday because the federal government has refused to issue him an emergency passport.

Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon told reporters Friday that Abousfian Abdelrazik's passport had been denied "on the basis of national security."

Cannon declined to give further details on the matter.

But Abdelrazik's supporters say the government is denying a Canadian citizen his rights.



NDP foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar appears on CTV Newsnet on Friday, April 3, 2009.

NDP foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar went a step further on Friday and accused the government of changing its position on the file.

"We were hoping that Mr. Abdelrazik would be on his way home today," Dewar told CTV's Power Play.

Dewar added that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said last year it would supply Abdelrazik with travel documents if he was able to secure a plane ticket home.

However, despite the fact that 170 Canadian supporters chipped in to buy Abdelrazik a ticket, the government still hasn't supplied the documents.

"The government, basically, broke it's word," said Dewar.

However, Deepak Obhari, Cannon's parliamentary secretary, said Abdelrazik can't fly home until he is removed from a United Nations no-fly list.



Deepak Obhari, Minister Cannon's parliamentary secretary, appears on Power Play on Friday, April 3, 2009.

"So that creates a very serious problem for us (in) a legal aspect," said Obhari. Canadian authorities seized Abdelrazik's previous passport, leaving him in legal limbo.

On Thursday, Abdelrazik spoke publicly about his situation for the first time, in hopes of pressuring the government into getting him back to Canadian soil.

"For six years I have tried to go back home to my children, but the Canadian government took my old passport and will not give me another one," Abdelrazik said in a statement released by his lawyers.

He also said that despite what has been said about him, he is not a criminal.

"I am a Muslim and I pray to my God but this does not make me a terrorist or a criminal," he said.

Stuck in Sudan

Abdelrazik has been in Sudan since 2003, when he was arrested after travelling to the country to visit his sick mother.

A recent report has suggested that it was CSIS who asked for him to be detained by Sudanese authorities in 2003. Back then, authorities claimed Abdelrazik held ties to Osama bin Laden.

After he was arrested, investigators could find no evidence of criminal activities on Abdelrazik's part and he was set free and did not face any charges.

Those findings were later confirmed by the RCMP, though the Canadian government still considers him to be a security risk.

Abdelrazik has said he was tortured when he was detained in Sudan.

He eventually ended up seeking shelter at the Canadian embassy in Khartoum, where he has lived for the past year.

Embassy staff are providing him with food and he is sleeping on a cot in the building's gym.

He has held Canadian citizenship since 1995.

With files from The Canadian Press