

Media Release

Supporters present Abdelrazik's June 12th plane ticket to Foreign Affairs officials

Ottawa, Tuesday June 9th – A small delegation of contributors to Abousfian Abdelrazik's ticket fund waited in the rain today to deliver a plane ticket to Minister Lawrence Cannon or a representative today at the Foreign Affairs Building in Ottawa.

James Loney, one of the ticket contributors, shared his thoughts at being at Foreign Affairs. “The last time I was here, it was three years ago, when this same Conservative government had gone to extraordinary lengths to rescue me when I was kidnapped in Baghdad and held for four months,” he stated, referring to the high-profile case of the Christian Peacemakers Team. “There are a lot of good people in this building who helped me as a Canadian needing assistance abroad.”

On June 4th, the Federal Court issued an order directing the government to bring Abousfian Abdelrazik back to Montreal within thirty days – thus by July 3rd. The Federal Court found that the government had breached Mr. Abdelrazik's charter rights by refusing to issue him an emergency passport. The court also found that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) had been complicit in Mr. Abdelrazik's arrest in Sudan.

Mr. Abdelrazik already has a paid-for ticket for a flight scheduled to leave Khartoum on Friday, June 12th. The ticket was purchased by a fund to which around 250 Canadians – from St. John's to Victoria to Iqaluit, and from all walks of life – have contributed, despite a risk of prosecution. Originally booked for April 3rd, the ticket was re-booked after Minister Cannon refused to issue the travel document that Mr. Abdelrazik needed to board his flight.

The delegation went to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa this morning in order to offer Minister Cannon the June 12th plane ticket as an easy, cost-effective and rapid means for the government to comply with the 4 June Federal Court order to bring Abousfian home.

“Now that the government has to bring him home, why not take advantage of this opportunity?” asked Samantha McGavin, a local ticket contributor.

However, the goodwill gesture received a chilly reception. Security at the government building refused the small and dignified group (about a dozen people, including several senior citizens) entry into the building's reception area, insisting that any package be delivered to the service entry. About 7 or 8 TV outlets filmed the stand-off. After close to two hours, two members, James Loney and Francine Dumas, were finally allowed into the building, provided the meeting was off-limits to media. They met with the Director-General of Consular Policy and Advocacy Bureau, Lillian Thomsen, and two others; while the officials refused to take a printout of the electronic ticket, they acknowledged that they were aware that the ticket was available for their use.

Despite the less than warm welcome, McGavin remains enthusiastic about Mr. Abdelrazik's imminent return. “It is good news that the government is aware that there is already a ticket booked for this Friday. We hope they will immediately issue an emergency passport in time for him to get on that plane. While the government may have a better plan to bring him home quickly and safely, this option is already arranged and paid for, and will bring Mr. Abdelrazik home without delay. Why make him wait any longer?”

Media contacts:

Francine Dumas 819-643-4155

James Loney 416-516-2326

Samantha McGavin 613-864-1809 (cell)

Jo Wood 613-864-5959 (cell)

Source:

Project Fly Home, projectflyhome@gmail.com, www.peoplescommission.org/abdelrazik.php

The following organizations support the public campaign to bring Abousfian Abdelrazik home:

Canadian Labour Congress; No one is illegal Ottawa; International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group; PeaceWorks, Sarnia, Ontario; Peaceworks, Midland, Ontario; People for Peace, London; Council of Canadians | London; Educators for Justice - Waterloo Region Catholic School Board; Camp Micah: Leadership for Peace and Justice; Polaris Institute; Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War; Boundary Peace Initiative; Peace Alliance Winnipeg; Canadian Peace Alliance; Bengali Students Association of the University of Waterloo; Fredericton Peace Coalition; Advocacy Collective, Fredericton; Rassemblement Outaouais contre la guerre (ROCG); Tikkun Toronto; Canadian Union of Postal Workers; Nowar-Paix; Bathurst United Church, Toronto; The Justice for Mohamed Harkat Committee; Toronto Action for Social Change; People's Commission Network; Rights Action; Ontario Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (OCHRP); Apatrides Anonymes; No One Is Illegal Toronto; OPIRG-Carleton; Windsor Peace Coalition; Paradigm Shift Environmental Alliance; Exile Infoshop; The Voice of Women (Ontario), Letter Writing Group; Student Coalition Against War, Ottawa U; Solidarity Across Borders; No One Is Illegal-Montreal; Ottawa Raging Grannies; Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN); Group for Research and Initiative for the Liberation of Africa; Ligue des droits et libertés; Tadamon! Montreal; Anti-War@Laurier (AW@L); Unitarian Universalists Windsor Region; Muslim Students Association of the University of Victoria; Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW); Canadian Islamic Congress; South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC); Immigrant Workers Center; Hamilton Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers); Montreal Chapter of the Council of Canadians; Le DIRA; Ici la Otra campaña - Montreal; La Pointe Libertaire; No one is illegal Vancouver; Windsor District Labour Council; OPIRG-Ottawa; Council of Canadians - Peterborough and Kawarthas chapter; Muslim Council of Montreal; Conseil Central de Montréal Métropolitain - CSN; Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU); Comité Justice sociale des Soeurs Auxiliatrices; PINAY; Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT); Collectif Échec à la guerre; Présence Musulmane Montréal; Nonviolent Resource Centre; Council of Canadians - Grand River chapter; Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends; Green Party of Canada; QPIRG Concordia; Astrolabe; 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy; Student Christian Movement of Canada; Canadian Arab Federation; Council of Canadians; Les Artistes pour la paix; Christian Peacemaker Teams Canada; Confederation of Canadian Unions; Coalition pour la justice en Palestine - UQAM; Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW); Science for Peace; The Gathering of Baptists; Hidaya Association.