

Ottawa begged to stop blocking 'peaceful' man's return home; Terror suspect in Sudan allowed to take refuge in Canadian embassy

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Title: Ottawa begged to stop blocking 'peaceful' man's return home; Terror suspect in Sudan allowed to take refuge in Canadian embassy

Illustrations:

□ Tom Hanson the Canadian press Myriam St-Hilaire tells reporters in Ottawa yesterday that Canada must let her ex-husband Abousfian Abdelrazik return from Sudan. "He is a Canadian citizen and he has rights," she said. They have a 5-year-old son.

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A man stranded in Sudan took refuge in Canada's embassy in Khartoum yesterday while seeking a resolution to his five-year ordeal.

A lawyer for Sudanese-Canadian Abousfian Abdelrazik says his client has been allowed to stay at the embassy and plans to remain there until he gets answers from Ottawa.

Lawyer Yavar Hameed is accusing the federal government of duplicity and disinformation, with mounting evidence it has been blocking efforts to bring his client home.

Abdelrazik went to visit his ailing mother in 2003 and was caught in legal limbo after accusations he has terrorist ties; no criminal charges have been filed against the former Montrealer. He suffers from asthma, heart problems, and an ulcer, and is living on a \$100 monthly loan from the Canadian government.

Abdelrazik's ex-wife is demanding that Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier deal with his case.

"He is not a terrorist. ... He is a practising Muslim but a peaceful Muslim," Myriam St-Hilaire told reporters in Ottawa yesterday.

"He is a Canadian citizen and he has rights and I'm just asking the government to take in consideration this fact," adding that their son, 5, doesn't remember his father.

"I'm asking Mr. Bernier: What am I supposed to answer him when he grows up and he tells me, 'Why wasn't my dad able to be next to me when I was a child?'" St-Hilaire said. "Mr. Bernier, what am I supposed to answer him?"

Hameed said his client's only contact with Bernier's office seemed more like an inquisition than consular assistance.

He said the Canadian government has stranded Abdelrazik by refusing to renew his passport, get him off a no-fly list or accept a Sudanese offer to fly him to Canada.

Bernier's office said it was reviewing the case but Abdelrazik remains a terrorism suspect. It released a statement: "We continue to provide Mr. Abdelrazik with consular assistance. Services include medical and financial assistance, facilitating communications with family and lawyers, as well as providing 'temporary safe haven' at our embassy in Khartoum.

"Mr. Abdelrazik is unable to return to Canada of his own accord because he is currently on the United Nations list of terrorism suspects alleged to be affiliated with Al Qaeda, the Taliban or Osama bin Laden."

During Abdelrazik's visit to see his mother, he was arrested by Sudanese officials on a tip from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, said his lawyer. He was released when no evidence was found to support criminal charges.