

Montreal man still in Sudan, unable to use plane ticket

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A Montreal man remains in the Canadian Embassy in Sudan, holding a plane ticket with Friday's date on it, but lacking the travel documents he needs to return to Canada.

Abousfian Abdelrazik's supporters purchased the ticket for him on May 27, eight days before a Federal Court judge ordered the federal government to allow him to return, ruling his charter rights have been breached.

Abdelrazik, 47, was arrested and detained as an al-Qaeda suspect while visiting his mother in Sudan in 2003 and for the past year has been living in the embassy in Khartoum.

Both the RCMP and Canadian Security Intelligence Service have cleared Abdelrazik of any terrorist connections, but the Conservative government refuses to issue him travel documents to return home, because his name was added to a UN Security Council list banning travel for terrorist suspects.

On June 4, Judge Russell Zinn ordered the government to facilitate Abdelrazik's return within 30 days.

Yavar Hameed, the stranded man's lawyer, said he doesn't understand why the government didn't avail itself of the paid airplane ticket, which would have seen Abdelrazik arrive in Toronto on Saturday.

In an interview with CBC News, Hameed said the uncertainty over when, or if, his client will be allowed to return to Canada is taking its toll.

"On June 4th, he was on top of the world. That lasted for a couple of hours, because then reality set in," Hameed said.

"The fact remains is that he's still in the embassy. Until he gets word from consular affairs that he's going out on a plane, everything else is just sort of this ethereal hope," he said.

Hameed said he hopes the government does not appeal the Federal Court decision.

"I'm hopeful that the federal government does not take us down that path, because we're talking about a man's life, and it's not a legal game," he said.

"It's not something that's, you know, to be a venue for advancing the law or some clarification of the facts. Let's just bring him home," he said.

In response to a call from CBC News Friday, the office of Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon said: "The government is reviewing the federal court decision and is unable to comment further at this time."

