

Abdelrazik back in Canada

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

Last Updated: 27th June 2009, 7:43pm

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — A Canadian man has arrived home after six years in exile in Sudan.

Abousfian Abdelrazik, who has family in Montreal, was arrested but not charged during a 2003 visit to Sudan to see his ill mother.

Abdelrazik arrived at Pearson International Airport on Saturday afternoon and was to continue on to Montreal, where he planned to attend a midnight rally with his supporters.

“I’m very glad to come back home,” he said in a brief statement after getting off the airplane.

He thanked everyone who supported him during his ordeal.

“This is your work that I am here now. I am proud to be a citizen of this nation.”

Lawyer Audrey Brousseau said Abdelrazik will spend the next couple of weeks relaxing with his family and getting adjusted to life in Canada.

Brousseau said she could not say what lies ahead on the legal front.

Abdelrazik says CSIS and American FBI officers interrogated him over alleged terrorist links and also claims he was tortured.

Canada says it knew nothing of the alleged abuse.

Sudanese authorities eventually released Abdelrazik, who denies involvement in extremism, and the RCMP says there is no information linking him to criminal activities.

Federal Court ruled that the government breached Abdelrazik’s constitutional rights by refusing to give him an emergency passport and ordered him returned within 30 days.

Abdelrazik has been living in the Canadian embassy in Khartoum for months. The Canadian government initially refused him a passport on the grounds that he remains on a United Nations terror watch list.

His lawyer, Yavar Hameed, boarded a flight Wednesday to bring his client home.

A document recently posted on the UN Security Council terrorist blacklist website claims Abdelrazik has been closely tied to senior al-Qaida leadership.

It alleges Abdelrazik has close ties to Osama bin Laden's former lieutenant, who recruited and ran al-Qaida's network of training camps in Afghanistan.

The document further asserts Abdelrazik trained at a paramilitary camp in Afghanistan with other al-Qaida operatives, and provided administrative and logistical support to the terrorist network.

(Abdelrazik) was a member of a cell in Montreal, Canada, whose members met in al-Qaida's Khalden training camp in Afghanistan, it says.

None of the allegations are new. It is already known that Abdelrazik was added to the UN list in summer 2006 after the United States branded him a supporter of al-Qaida — the Federal Court found no supporting evidence for this claim.

A UN terror watch listing freezes that person's assets and forbids anyone inside or outside the country from providing funds to them.

That didn't stop scores of Canadians from chipping in to buy Abdelrazik an airline ticket earlier this year.

But his passport had expired and he could not leave Sudan without one.

In April, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon reneged on a promise to issue Abdelrazik an emergency passport if he could get a plane ticket.

Federal Court Justice Russel Zinn ruled that the government violated Abdelrazik's Charter right to enter Canada by failing to justify its decision to deny him a temporary travel document.