



Abousfian Abdelrazik flashes a victory sign upon returning to Montreal. (June 28, 2009)

Abousfian Abdelrazik returns to Montreal

Kevin Gould, ctvmontreal.ca

A Montrealer who was trapped in Sudan for more than five years is finally home.

Abousfian Abdelrazik was reunited with his family Saturday night in downtown Montreal.

He was also greeted by 40 cheering supporters, many who had never met him, but had laboured for years to ensure his return to Canada.

Abdelrazik told the crowd he was grateful for their help, and is looking forward to readjusting to life in Canada with his family.

The 47-year-old Montrealer was last in Canada in 2003, when he left to visit his mother in Sudan.

Abdelrazik arrived in Africa to find out he was on a United Nations terrorist watchlist. He was arrested on suspicion of terrorism, then released. He was never charged, but was investigated by the RCMP and CSIS. Both agencies cleared his name, determining that Abdelrazik had no ties to any terrorist group.

However the investigation took so long that his passport expired, and the Federal Government refused to issue him a new one so he could come back to Canada.

That began his long struggle to return to Canada. A struggle that was aided by supporters like Brian Aboud, who never met Abdelrazik.

"At a human level I felt there was a need to take a responsibility," said Aboud.

He was permitted to live in the Canadian Embassy for 14 months, but still Ottawa refused to let him come home.

Montreal city councillor Warren Allmand was one of the people who lobbied hard to get Abdelrazik back in Canada.

"The government had promised they said if he had a ticket they'd allow him to return. They found other reasons. Every time we did what they said they wanted, they refused," said Allmand.

Earlier this month, a Federal Court judge ruled that Abdelrazik should be allowed to return home and he ordered the government to take steps to bring him back to Canada within 30 days.

That has finally happened, and a joyful celebration is expected around midnight as Allmand, Aboud, and other supporters who have never met Abdelrazik welcome him back to Montreal.

Abdelrazik also comes home to a wife and three children who haven't seen him for six years.

He is due in court on July 7 to prove he has made it back to Canada, and he will also attempt to get his name removed from the U.N. blacklist.



Supporters hold a banner welcoming Abousfian Abdelrazik back to Canada. (June 28, 2009)



Abousfian Abdelrazik hugs his stepdaughter and his son upon his return to Montreal. (June 28, 2009)



Abousfian Abdelrazik hugs his stepdaughter. (June 28, 2009)