

Abdelrazik is coming home to testify about forced exile in Sudan

By Project Fly Home
May 27, 2009

Abousfian Abdelrazik's lawyer Yavar Hameed announced in a press conference in Ottawa today that the stranded Canadian plans to fly home on 12 June 2009 in order to appear at the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs before Parliament adjourns for the summer.

Earlier this month, after a motion introduced by NDP Foreign Affairs Critic Paul Dewar was voted through the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Abdelrazik was invited to appear before the Committee to testify about his six years of forced exile in Sudan.

Mr. Abdelrazik's flight home has been paid for by a solidarity fund to which over 250 people and organizations from across Canada, including well-known figures such as former UN Special Envoy Stephen Lewis, have contributed, in defiance of the risk of being criminally charged for making a financial contribution to Mr. Abdelrazik, whose name was placed on the UN 1267 "black list" by the Bush administration.

Denis Lemelin, President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and Ihsaan Gardee, Executive Director of CAIRCAN, announced that their organizations are preparing to help send a civil society delegation to Sudan to accompany Abousfian Abdelrazik home on 12 June.

This initiative has already received the endorsement of several high profile individuals, including: Mr. Warren Allmand, former Solicitor General of Canada and human rights advocate; Abdullah Almalki, who, like Mr. Abdelrazik, was detained, interrogated and tortured while on a visit overseas; Maher Arar, victim of "extraordinary rendition"; Monia Mazigh, human rights advocate; and David Suzuki, environmental activist.

Mr. Abdelrazik has been living in limbo in the Canadian Embassy in Khartoum for more than a year. On 3 April 2009, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon refused Mr. Abdelrazik the travel document he needed to board a flight home to Canada, after more than 100 people banded together to buy him a plane ticket home. Mr. Cannon stated that the UN 1267 list prevented Mr. Abdelrazik from flying home, but the UN Coordinator of the Monitoring Team for the list, Mr. Richard Barrett, has since clarified that, "Whether it is Abdelrazik or anybody else, it is up to the state in question whether they want to allow the person to come back or not."

On 7 May, Mr. Abdelrazik's legal team asked the Federal Court to order the government to bring him home by any safe means possible. The Court has not yet rendered its decision.

The following organizations support Project Fly Home, 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 Micab: 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 Kawartha's chapter, Muslim Council of Montreal, Conseil Central de Montréal Métropolitain - CSN, Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU), Comité Justice sociale des Soeurs Auxiliatrices, PINAY, 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, Astrolabe, QPIRG Concordia, Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).