

Exiled Canadian appears in Montreal courtroom

BY IRWIN BLOCK, MONTREAL GAZETTE JULY 7, 2009

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Abofian Abdelrazik, the Sudanese Montrealer just ordered back to Canada, talks to reporters flanked by his lawyers outside Federal Court in Montreal on Tuesday.

Photograph by: Pierre Obendrauf, Montreal Gazette

MONTREAL — Abofian Abdelrazik appeared briefly Tuesday before the Federal Court judge who ordered his return to Canada from involuntary exile in Sudan.

Justice Russell Zinn, however, did not allow Abdelrazik, 47, to address the court, saying it was "unnecessary to express your appreciation."

The Sudanese-born Canadian, allegedly tortured by Sudanese authorities, is on a United Nations terrorism blacklist, put there by U.S. authorities, which prevented him for the past year from flying home.

He returned to Canada June 27 and appeared in court at Zinn's request, who wanted confirmation his ruling had been complied with.

The case attracted widespread attention because he was forced to live in the Canadian Embassy foyer in Khartoum for a year, even though the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian Security Intelligence Service had cleared him and he has never been charged with a crime.

Zinn told Abdelrazik he has been treated in his court "like any other citizen" and it would be inappropriate to allow him to express his thanks.

However, Zinn thanked the federal government for its efforts to bring Abdelrazik home.

As for the allegations of his connections with terrorist groups, Zinn said, "I find the allegations to be untrue."

He urged Abdelrazik to move beyond the past and to concentrate on the present. Quoting from Charles Dickens, in *David Copperfield*, the judge asked whether Abdelrazik would turn out to be the hero of his own life.

Outside the court, Abdelrazik made a brief statement saying, "I feel very happy because this six years of suffering has ended, for me and my family."

Without being specific, he said he wants those responsible for his detention to "face justice — not because I seek revenge, but because I want this not to happen to any Canadian citizen anymore."

He said he yearns to get back to "normal life" and to have his name removed from the UN no-fly list as soon as possible.

"This list is unjust, unfair, and makes my life very difficult." Anyone who hires him can be charged with aiding someone on a terrorist list.

His lawyer, Yavar Hameed, said he had asked to meet with Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon and Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan to seek "accountability" for Abdelrazik's imprisonment.

He will also seek federal support in getting Abdelrazik's name delisted from the UN terrorism blacklist.

Hameed would not say whether a lawsuit is planned.