

## **EDITORIAL**

### **Harper vs. Parliament**

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If Prime Minister Stephen Harper isn't willing to bring home Abousfian Abdelrazik from Sudan, the House of Commons foreign affairs committee is. This week, prodded by New Democrat MP Paul Dewar, the panel voted unanimously (with government members abstaining) to ask Abdelrazik to appear before it. This is an unprecedented bid to repatriate a citizen abandoned by his own government.

It puts Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon squarely on the spot. If he refuses to issue the required travel documents, the committee can ask the Speaker to issue a warrant for Abdelrazik to appear, out of concern that a minister is subverting the committee's privileges. More stonewalling could put cabinet in contempt of Parliament.

This case is chilling because Canada is effectively negating Abdelrazik's rights as a citizen, absent any due process.

Abdelrazik has been stuck in Sudan for six years. The UN put him on its no-fly list of terror suspects at the request of Washington, which labelled him an Al Qaeda recruiter. However, Canada asked the UN last year to clear him after the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said they had no current, substantive information that he was a terrorist. He has lived in our embassy for a year and denies being "an Islamic extremist."

While Ottawa promised on Dec. 23 to give him travel documents, Cannon reneged on April 3, citing unspecified "national security" reasons. By turns, Ottawa has been inconsistent, incoherent and shady.

What role did Canadian officials play in Abdelrazik's arrest in Sudan in 2003? In his questioning and alleged torture? How solid are Cannon's reasons for not bringing him home?

Parliament should stand behind the committee's bid to get answers to these questions.