

If they'll lie about Abdelrazik, what else will they lie about?

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The Harper government has sent its lawyers to the Federal Court today to defend its indefensible exiling of Abousfian Abdelrazik, who's been stuck in Khartoum for more than six years and is now holed up in the Canadian embassy there.

What bothers me the most about this case, even more than the violation of Abdelrazik's rights, is the willingness of the Conservatives to lie to the Canadian people about it. And not just lie once — lie over and over again. As the *Globe's* editorialists [pointed out](#) the other day, it's starting to look like the Canadian government is covering up its role in having Abdelrazik tortured:

The government says it did not ask Sudan to detain Abousfian Abdelrazik, whom the United States government suspected of being an al-Qaeda recruiter linked to Abu Zubaydah, an al-Qaeda leader. But documents obtained by *The Globe* show on their face that Canada did exactly what it denies having done.

Then there's the latest excuse for leaving him in Sudan: Since he's on a UN terrorism watch list, he can't fly home, or he can't fly over the airspace of other countries. Paul Koring's [story](#) today shows that if the Harper government had bothered to ask the UN, they would have discovered that is not, fact, true. So either they didn't bother to check, which would be spectacular and negligent incompetence, or they're lying.

And, of course, they only came up with this whole line of excuses recently. The story used to be this, as reported in the *Globe* just two months ago:

After refusing him a passport for years, the Harper government promised in writing that it would give Mr. Abdelrazik a temporary emergency travel document if he could get a confirmed reservation for a flight home. Most airlines, including Air Canada, have refused to carry him because the Bush administration also put him on the U.S. no-fly list. However, when Etihad Airways, based in Abu Dhabi, agreed to fly him home last September, the government imposed a new condition: that he have a fully paid-for ticket.

Once he got the ticket, the government had to come up with a new excuse.

Good on the *Globe's* Paul Koring for following this story.

Chris Selley had a great line for the *Post* about this whole farce [in April](#):

At this rate, those poor justice department lawyers will soon be arguing there's no such place as Sudan... or that heavier-than-air craft aren't capable of flight under the laws of gravity.

Good for NDP MP Paul Dewar for [pushing the government](#) on this, and getting the foreign affairs committee to demand that Abdelrazik appear before it. I'm not convinced it will work, given the lack of shame already demonstrated by the government, but it's worth a shot.