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Globe's Paul Koring nominated for second Michener Award

From Wednesday's Globe and Mail

International affairs correspondent exposed plight of Canadian's forced exile in Sudan

The Globe and Mail's Paul Koring is in the running for a second Michener Award after he was nominated for his compelling stories on the plight of Abousfian Abdelrazik, a Canadian who spent nearly six years in prison and forced exile in Sudan while the Canadian government thwarted his attempts to come home.

The international affairs correspondent won the award in 2008 with fellow Globe reporter Graeme Smith for their work on the treatment of Afghan detainees. The Michener Award celebrates news organizations for public service journalism.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Koring was honoured with the Amnesty International Canada Award for human-rights reporting for the more than 60 stories that shone a light on Mr. Abdelrazik's treatment and forced the government to act.

Beginning with little more than a tip, Mr. Koring spent months piecing together the startling story of Mr. Abdelrazik. [http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/the-never-ending-ordeal-of-abousfian-abdelrazik/article1540808] The Canadian citizen was accused of having terrorism connections, denied a passport and ended up sleeping on a cot in the lobby of the Canadian embassy in Khartoum despite being cleared of any wrongdoing by Canadian and Sudanese officials. To this day, Mr. Abdelrazik has never been charged with a crime.

The stories sparked outrage and court action, which led to last June's ruling by Federal Court Judge Russel Zinn that the Canadian government violated Mr. Abdelrazik's rights. He was ordered to be returned home from Khartoum within 15 days.





"Anyone who doubts the importance of professional journalism should study how this story came about," says John Stackhouse, The Globe's editor-in-chief. "Despite many obstacles, from government resistance to public apathy, Paul pieced together an irrefutable file of facts. It took him nearly two years, countless interviews and a diligent paper trail, just to prove the now-obvious - a basic wrong had occurred."

The Michener Foundation is also taking the unique step of giving a special posthumous award to Michelle Lang, the Calgary Herald reporter who became the first Canadian journalist to die in Afghanistan.

She was killed in December in a roadside blast that also claimed the lives of four soldiers.

CBC parliamentary bureau business and technology reporter Julie Ireton won the Michener-Deacon Fellowship to pursue an investigation called The Federal Public Service: Middle-men, Double-Dipping and Cronyism.

Other Michener award nominees include Shannon Kari of the National Post for a series on Ontario police and Crown running background checks on potential jury members. CTV's W5 program was given a nod for Beyond Justice, a report about three killings by RCMP officers in British Columbia and the justice system's failure to hold the police accountable.

The Gazette, The Times Colonist and La Société Radio-Canada/Canadian Broadcasting Corp. are also among the nominees.

The Michener nominations come less than a month after The Globe and Mail received 15 National Newspaper Award nominations - more than any other news organization in the country.

Winners will be announced May 27 at a ceremony hosted by Governor-General Michaëlle Jean at Rideau Hall.

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