

## Tories get a new chance to embarrass themselves over Abousfian Abdelrazik

Posted: May 27, 2009, 2:00 PM by NP Editor  
National Post

*As if the federal government needs a new opportunity to embarrass itself on this file, the House committee on foreign affairs is raising the issue of Abousfian Abdelrazik again.*

Abdelrazik has been sheltering in the Canadian embassy in Khartoum for over a year because Ottawa refuses to allow his return, on the basis that his name appears on a UN watchlist. The UN has [said](#) there is no reason his appearance on the watch list should prevent his return, but the federal Conservatives are adamant, for reasons they have been unwilling or unable to explain.

The committee has engineered an opportunity to revive the issue, inviting Abdelrazik to appear before it, and organizing transportation for him. NDP MP Paul Dewar said arrangements have been made to fly him home on June 12. A "a solidarity fund" of the usual leftwing suspects has contributed to the effort, and a "civil society delegation" -- i.e. noisy union organizations, student groups and self-declared "activists" -- plan to fly over to maximize the potential discomfort level for the Tories.

Lawrence Cannon, the foreign affairs minister, has already said he won't be pressured into changing his mind. At some point, though, the government is going to have to explain its position on this one, which exposes it to regular ridicule of this sort.

### **NDP press release:**

#### LET COMMITTEE DO IT'S WORK IN ABDELRAZIK'S CASE: DEWAR

OTTAWA – New Democrat Foreign Affairs Critic Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre) called on the government allow the committee to go ahead with repatriating Canadian citizen Abousfian Abdelrazik.

“The federal government has failed on this case, so the Foreign Affairs committee decided to act and invited Mr. Abdelrazik to appear as a witness,” said Dewar whose motion at the Foreign Affairs committee was adopted unanimously. “Still, Minister Cannon told the committee on Monday that he is not going to issue the necessary travel documents for Mr. Abdelrazik’s return. Why is the Minister putting himself in contempt of the committee?”

Dewar was joined by community members and Mr. Abdelrazik’s legal representatives who announced travel arrangements made for repatriating him on June 12, 2009.

Mr. Abdelrazik has been stranded in Sudan for over six years. He cannot travel because the Conservative government is not issuing him a Canadian passport. The government insists that Mr. Abdelrazik’s listing on the UN’s travel ban means he cannot return to Canada. But UN officials have stated that Canada can repatriate its citizens, despite the travel ban. CSIS, RCMP and the

government of Sudan have cleared Mr. Abdelrazik of any wrongdoing.

“I call on the Minister to reconsider his decision, do the right thing and allow the committee to go ahead with repatriating Mr. Abdelrazik,” stated Dewar. “For members of the committee all options are on the table to ensure we can perform our duties to the people of Canada.”

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