



Aousfian Abdelrazik, left, smiles as he returns to Canada at Pearson International airport in Toronto after a six-year exile in Sudan on Saturday, June 27, 2009. (Nathan Denette / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Abdelrazik arrives in Toronto after six-year exile

CTV.ca News Staff

After nearly six years of being stranded in Sudan because of a United Nations blacklist, Aousfian Abdelrazik has finally returned to Canadian soil.

He arrived in Toronto Saturday afternoon, and will continue to Montreal to reunite with his family.

"I'm very glad to come back home," Abdelrazik said, speaking at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

He also thanked his supporters, who have organized a midnight rally in Montreal, for bringing him back to Canada.

"This is your work that I am here now. I am proud to be a citizen of this nation."

Abdelrazik, 47, has not been able to return to Canada since leaving to visit his ailing mother in Sudan in 2003.

When he arrived in Sudan, he was arrested on suspicion of having links to terrorism, but was later released. Abdelrazik was never charged and in Canada, he was cleared by both

CSIS and the RCMP.

More recently, Abdelrazik spent 14 months sleeping on a cot at the Canadian embassy in Khartoum, while he fought to obtain the clearance he needed to return home.

For months, Ottawa refused to issue him a passport and the UN said he remained on a terror watch list.

Earlier this month, Federal Court Justice Russell Zinn ruled that Abdelrazik should be allowed to return home and he ordered the government to take steps to bring him back to Canada within 30 days.

A short time later, the Conservative government said it would comply with the order.

Yavar Hameed, a member of Abdelrazik's Canadian legal team, boarded a plane for Sudan on Wednesday, with the intention of bringing his client home.

James Loney, a spokesperson for Project Fly Home -- the public campaign to bring Abdelrazik home -- said Abdelrazik will have to readjust to life in Canada with his family.

"I think that Mr. Abdelrazik just at this point will want to be re-united with his family, get readjusted and reacquainted to his friends and life in Canada and he will have to think what his next steps will be," Loney told CTV News Channel.

Amir Attaran, a University of Ottawa law professor, said Abdelrazik is thrilled -- but exhausted -- after his journey.

Echoing Zinn's legal decision, Attaran said that "draconian" laws have made Abdelrazik a victim of terror.

"He's the other sort of victim, who is becoming increasingly common when government becomes tyrannical," Attaran told CTV News Channel.

Abdelrazik's troubles will likely continue in Canada as he continues to be on a UN terror list, which bars him from working or receiving financial assistance

"The persecution and the injustice here are going to continue," said Attaran.

While Maher Arar received millions in compensation from the Canadian government for being unjustly labelled as a terror threat, Abdelrazik has yet to indicate he will seek damages from Ottawa, said Attaran.

In fact, the government may seek compensation from Abdelrazik for the food and medicine he consumed during his stay at the Canadian Embassy in Sudan, said Attaran.

"If the federal government is so incredibly stupid as to want \$7,000 out of him for the food he ate while they illegally kept him out of the country, that issue will have to go to court, and while it's in court, maybe a judge will decide it's not the federal government that's owed money, but Mr. Abdelrazik."