

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Mysterious people tailing Abdelrazik in first days home

Lawyer suspects security agents following his client, threatens to seek injunction

Les Perreux

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Abousfian Abdelrazik is back on Canadian soil a partly free man, but his lawyer says mysterious people are watching his every move and he may seek a court injunction to stop it.

Mr. Abdelrazik was getting reacquainted with family Sunday after arriving in Montreal, while people in plain clothes and unmarked cars followed and videotaped him.

His lawyer, Yavar Hameed, suspects Canadian security agencies are the ones watching the man accused of having terrorist links. The tail began shortly after he left behind two RCMP officers and two Canadian diplomats who escorted him from Sudan.

Federal officials would not say whether they are watching Mr. Abdelrazik.

"I can tell you for a fact he is under surveillance, what I can't confirm right now is who, exactly, it is," Mr. Hameed said.

Mr. Abdelrazik, 47, returned from six years in Sudanese prison and Canadian-imposed exile after a judge ordered Ottawa to allow him to come home, but his situation remains murky.

The RCMP and CSIS have supposedly cleared the Canadian citizen of connections to al-Qaeda, but a United Nations Security Council committee maintains he is a terrorist suspect.

Mr. Abdelrazik left Canada to visit his mother in Sudan in 2003 after the close scrutiny of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service drove him to distraction.

"This [surveillance] is completely inappropriate given one of the factors that drove him out of the country is he was severely harassed by CSIS," Mr. Hameed said.

"If that pattern re-emerges, in light of what we know CSIS is involved in, there would be serious consequences," he said, referring to a possible court injunction to stop the shadow.

A spokesman for Peter Van Loan, the Public Safety Minister who is responsible for both the RCMP and CSIS, said the Privacy Act prevents the government from commenting on Mr. Abdelrazik. Officials with both Public Safety and Foreign Affairs would say only that the government has complied with the Federal Court order demanding his return.

A beaming Mr. Abdelrazik flashed a peace sign as he emerged from the arrival area of Toronto's Pearson Airport Saturday night.

The 47-year-old was driven by van to Montreal after federal officials barred him from the one-hour flight from Toronto. They refused to explain the ban, Mr. Hameed said.

After a 40-hour journey from Khartoum, Mr. Abdelrazik greeted his children at a Montreal hotel room where his eldest daughter, Wafa, gripped him in embrace.

“It's over, it's over,” she whispered to him in French.

Ten minutes later, he was greeted outside by 50 supporters and a brass band. He took no questions but made a brief speech.

“I want to say to my supporters from coast to coast, in every town, every city, thank you very much for supporting me. Through your efforts, now I am here,” Mr. Abdelrazik said.

“I'm proud to be a citizen of this famous nation.”

While CSIS and the RCMP have cleared Mr. Abdelrazik, a United Nations Security Council blacklist committee recently added fresh assertions saying he is a senior al-Qaeda operative, a friend of Osama bin Laden and a key member of a Montreal terrorist cell.

Because he is on the list, Canadian law forbids anyone from giving Mr. Abdelrazik money. Mr. Hameed plans to go to court to ask for an exception.

Mr. Abdelrazik, who spent the past 14 months living in the lobby of the Canadian embassy in Khartoum, denies the allegations.

Amir Attaran, a law professor on Mr. Abdelrazik's team, said obvious surveillance and the heavy-handed escort home demonstrate how ludicrous Canada's anti-terrorism enforcement has become.

“Security intelligence services have to become intelligent. They're not intelligent, they're stupid,” he said.

“They see ghosts and goblins at every turn and spend excess money making people miserable who don't deserve it.” *With reports from Bill Curry in Ottawa and Paul Koring*