

## Abdelrazik reunites with family in Montreal



**Abousfian Abdelrazik flashes a victory sign upon returning to Montreal. (June 28, 2009)**

CTV.ca News Staff

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Abousfian Abdelrazik has been reunited with his family in Montreal after spending nearly six years fighting to get back on Canadian soil.

The 47-year-old arrived in Montreal late Saturday, after travelling from Khartoum to Abu Dhabi, and then to Toronto earlier in the day.

When he arrived in Montreal around midnight, he was greeted by a crowd of about 40 supporters, similar to the crowd that greeted him at Toronto Pearson International Airport.

In Montreal, Abdelrazik flashed a peace sign and soon had the chance to embrace his son and stepdaughter for the first time in years.

Surrounded by a throng of reporters and supporters, his face beamed with a massive smile.

"I am very happy to see my family (and) to be in my city, with my people. I am very happy," he said.

Abdelrazik had been stranded in Sudan since 2003, the year he travelled to the country to visit his ailing mother.

He ended up being arrested on suspicion of having links to terrorism, but was later released without charge. While in a Sudanese prison, Abdelrazik said he was tortured.



**Abousfian Abdelrazik hugs his stepdaughter. (June 28, 2009)**

Although he was cleared by both CSIS and the RCMP, Abdelrazik was barred from returning home to Canada because of a United Nations terror watch list and spent years fighting to clear his name.

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

For months, Ottawa refused to issue him a passport and he remains on the UN list. But when a Federal Court judge told the government he had to be returned to Canada within 30 days, the path was cleared for him to see his family again.

Salam Elmenyawji, from the Muslim Council of Montreal, said Abdelrazik's case defied Canada's constitutional rights.

"He was not treated equally as other Canadians," said Elmenyawji late Saturday, adding that due process had been ignored during the exile.

Supporter Clayton Grassick echoed those sentiments and said that bringing Abdelrazik home is an important victory for the nation's democratic rights.

"If we would let a Canadian citizen be tortured and then permanently exiled, without any charges, without any court, without any due process, if we hadn't stopped that, then we would have crossed a line."

However, Abdelrazik's ordeal isn't finished as he remains on a UN blacklist, which bars him from seeking employment.

His lawyers could also launch a suit against the Canadian government if Ottawa was implicit in sharing information with Sudanese officials which led to Abdelrazik's arrest, said Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae.

However, with or without a legal case, Rae said the Canadian government should reveal if it did indeed share information with Sudan.

"This does raise very basic questions," Rae said, adding that Abdelrazik's case echoes that of Maher Arar.

Arar was awarded a \$10-million settlement after it was found that Ottawa played a part in his detainment and torture at the hands of Syrian officials.

"It's almost as if there are two classes of citizens, one that the government likes (and) ones that the government doesn't like," Rae told CTV News Channel from Toronto Sunday.

"That's something that gives me a lot of concern as a Canadian."

*With files from The Canadian Press and CTV Montreal*