

Press Advisory

Canadian Labour Congress challenges unjust UN sanctions against Canadian citizen Abousfian Abdelrazik

Press scrum/photo op

Tuesday, May 18th 2010, 9:30am

Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St., Ottawa

With

- Hassan Yussuff, Secretary-Treasurer, Canadian Labour Congress
- Abousfian Abdelrazik
- Denis Lemelin, President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers
- Dave Ritchie, Canadian vice-President, International Association of Machinists

Labour leaders, representing millions of workers Canada-wide, will announce an innovative way of supporting Abousfian Abdelrazik's right to work freely, challenging a beleaguered UN Security Council sanctions regime on a new front.

Last month the Canadian Labour Congress issued a call to Federations of Labour and Labour Councils across Canada to join the JUST WORK campaign, initiated by Project Fly Home, the group that helped bring Mr. Abdelrazik home to Canada.

The JUST WORK campaign is a direct challenge against the UN Security Council's 1267 regime and supports Mr. Abdelrazik's right to work with dignity despite severe legal sanctions. The CLC Secretary-Treasurer Hassan Yussuff will now announce details of the challenge.

Background

Mr. Abdelrazik, a machinist by trade, is subject to the UN Security Council 1267 regime (so called after the number of the resolution which established it), which imposes financial sanctions as well as a travel ban on listed individuals. Under Canadian law, it is illegal for any Canadian to "provide or collect by any means, directly or indirectly, funds with the intention that the funds be used" by listed individuals. The penalty is up to ten years imprisonment. This prevents Mr. Abdelrazik from working, since anyone paying him a salary could be charged.

The 1267 regime is under increasing attack internationally. In June 2009, the Federal Court of Canada delivered a blistering assault on its legitimacy, stating that "there is nothing in the listing or delisting procedures which recognizes the

principles of national justice". In January 2010, the UK Supreme Court struck down implementing legislation in that country. In the same month, Canadian opposition parties held Parliamentary hearings on the issue. In March, Swiss Parliament passed a resolution striking at the regime. In April, more than 170 people from across Canada joined in a "sanctions-busting telethon", donating to Abdelrazik in open defiance of the legislation. Mr. Abdelrazik's lawyers are expected to announce a legal challenge to the regime at any time.

Mr. Abdelrazik was arrested in Sudan on the request of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in 2003. Imprisoned without charge for two periods, totaling more than twenty months, he was subject to beatings and tortured. In this context, he was interrogated by two CSIS agents. Freed from prison, he was blocked from returning to Canada, in large part because his name was added to the 1267 list shortly after his final release from detention in 2006. A public outcry and a Federal Court order finally forced the government to repatriate him in June 2009. In 2007, both CSIS and RCMP formally conducted reviews and concluded they had nothing against Mr. Abdelrazik. Although Canada consequently took the position that he should be removed from the 1267 list, it continues to impose sanctions on him in Canada. Mr. Abdelrazik's bank account was frozen earlier this year.

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More information: Project Fly Home, www.peoplescommission.org/en/abdelrazik