

Accolades

BY THOMAS ADCOCK

NEW YORK's Center for Constitutional Rights and its client Maher Arar were given international human rights awards by the Institute for Policy Studies during a recent ceremony at institute headquarters in Washington, D.C., presided over by the British actress and political activist Vanessa Redgrave.

Mr. Arar is the Ottawa engineer detained by the United States in 2002 at John F. Kennedy International Airport and sent under "extraordinary rendition" authority to officials in Syria renowned for torture.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police recently apologized to Mr. Arar for passing information to U.S. intelligence personnel that erroneously accused him of terrorist connections. At the same time, a Canadian government commission certified that Mr. Arar had indeed been tortured for months in Syria. Mr. Arar accepted his award by video because he is still barred from entering the United States.

The awards were presented by Ms. Redgrave on Sept. 21, marking the 30th anniversary of a 1976 car bombing outside institute offices that killed Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier, an outspoken critic of his country's military dictatorship at the time, and Ronni Karpen Moffitt, a U.S. citizen and institute fundraiser. The award was given in memory of Mr. Letelier and Ms. Moffitt.

In addition to its work on the Arar case, the Center for Constitutional Rights was honored for the entirety of its 40-year crusade against torture and other human rights abuses. The center's lawyers won a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2004 allowing detainees held at the U.S. Naval prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, to challenge their imprisonment.