

# **Harper's Dereliction of Duty and Whimsical Disregard for Citizen Rights: The Suaad Hagi Mohamud Case**

## **Part I**

It could happen to you!

You are travelling. Flight personnel at the airport question the authenticity of your passport photo. You turn to your country's officials at the High Commission for help. One of the consular officials interviews you over the phone. You cannot answer some questions about Canadian geography. He says you do not sound legitimate. Local authorities hold you in detention overnight until the same officer comes to interview you the following day.

Once he is satisfied you are the same person to whom he spoke the day before, he takes your picture. That photo is identical to the one taken of you by a photo journalist when you land in Toronto – minus the tears. Still, he doesn't believe you are who you say you are, despite the six other pieces of ID you show him (including 3 government-issued photo ID cards). Your passport is seized, voided, and you are thrown in a Kenyan jail!

Local authorities say you might be deported to a third country. A trial date is set. You are compelled to hire a local lawyer. You try the Embassy again. The same officer interviews you again! You ask to be fingerprinted, offer to submit to a DNA test, anything to have them recognize you for who you are.

To no avail. Worse, the Embassy sends a letter to local authorities asking them to prosecute you as an imposter, a fraudster travelling with a legitimate Canadian passport!

Two weeks later, out on bail, you convince a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to take up your cause. Your friends and relatives in Canada engage your Member of Parliament; connect with press/media, a Canadian lawyer; and, your case receives some attention. Finally, a Canadian Federal Court instructs the Conservative Government to administer a DNA test on you and your son (who is in Canada). It proves you are who you have claimed to be all along.

Both the Canadian government and local authorities withdraw allegations and charges against you. You come home. But it is not over.

After three months of stress and strain, you have yourself checked out medically. Your case becomes the subject of interest in the House of Commons. Your lawyer files a Statement of Claim against the government. The Conservative Government responds by launching a ruthless, well-orchestrated "how dare you?" campaign with selected media outlets, by using the affidavit of the officer whose decision put you through the mess in the first place.

Despite proof to the contrary (letters, faxes, phone calls by me), Cabinet Ministers deny ever having heard of your case. Public opinion seems to turn against you. No one asks why an affidavit by an official who wouldn't agree to be cross-examined on his "theories and suspicions" in a foreign court is now a reputable source. Everyone forgets that, in any case, the DNA results rendered those theories in your regard null and void.

You're travelling...you lose your citizenship rights. The Government of Canada urges another country's court system to mete out its justice. Your only accuser, the Government of Canada, refuses to show up in court to defend its "case" against you, because it doesn't have one! You had to go to Federal Court to have the Government of Canada respect your rights. Now, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet are out to ruin your reputation and good name for having dared to stand up for yourself.

It could have been you! But, it really happened to Suaad Hagi Mohamud instead.

As her MP, I wish there were no need to defend Suaad Hagi's innocence of wrongdoing, even if (implicitly) under oath, before a House of Commons Committee, she said she had done nothing wrong. As a Canadian, I ask myself how an ordinary citizen defends herself when her own government "goes all out" to strip her of her civil rights? How vulnerable are we all when a taint of suspicion and smear tactics employed by the powerful is more convincing than the scientific proof supporting those who are less so?

Misrepresentation of the facts by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet Ministers may end up costing the taxpayer several millions of dollars. The damage to our Canadian civic-value structure is incalculable.