

**DENY, DENY and DECEIVE:
The Harper Government Beats Up Citizen Suaad Hagi Mohamud
Part II**

We cannot allow Suaad's story to be about alleged motives, personality, or how she responded under stress before an authority figure who held her future, if not her life, in his hands.

This much is irrefutable: she was in possession of an authentic, "original," passport and several other legitimate, government-issued ID (with photo) – all supporting her claim that she was indeed Suaad Hagi and all accepted by Canadian consular officials as valid.

Yet it took DNA tests conducted by order of a Canadian Federal Court before these officials dropped their charges and issued travel documents so that she could re-enter Canada.

Nor can we allow the story to be about the consular official whose decision caused Suaad so much grief. Access To Information Program (ATIP) documents indicate that even his own colleagues expressed doubts about his decision a mere 10 days after it was made! And no consular official was prepared to appear in Kenyan court to defend the allegations – effectively forcing Kenyan justice to quash the charges at some later date.

What should concern us is what his political masters, from the Prime Minister on down, did when they became aware of the file. Those ATIP documents note that the Prime Minister's department (PCO) began to manage the media lines on the case from June 5th. Prime Minister Harper himself was provided a briefing on Canada Day! What happened before and after speaks to dereliction of duty and cover-up.

In person, in writing and by phone, from June 12, 2009 onward, I pointed out to the Foreign Affairs Minister, his Parliamentary Secretary and their staff that the High Commission's action respecting Suaad left some gaping holes in logic and responsibility.

Specifically, if the alleged imposter Suaad was in possession of a passport our officials had verified as legitimate, then where was the "real" Suaad? Had anyone thought to check with the police in Nairobi regarding the whereabouts of the Canadian citizen and rightful holder of the passport? Was the "real" Suaad a victim of theft or violence? Was she safe? Did anyone call her Toronto home? Was she perhaps the author of, or participant in, a fraud? If so, what evidence trumped the documentation in her possession? Was anyone prepared to lay charges? What were they? Had the RCMP been instructed to begin investigations in Canada? Why would we hand over a Canadian document to a foreign authority without first making an effort to locate the rightful holder of that document? What did we expect Kenyan courts to do for us?

Three separate Ministers and the Privy Council Office stood by the statements contained in a letter dated May 28, 2009 (when Suaad was still in jail) from the High Commission to the Kenyan authorities, wherein they declared Suaad was an imposter pursuant to “conclusive investigations”. But no documented evidence (or report) to substantiate these “investigations” could be produced; not in mid-June nor subsequently.

As per ATIP documents, it appears that, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his Deputy Minister met to discuss the file on July 15th. The next day, the Suaad file became the sole responsibility of the Minister for Border Services and Public Security.

A week later, Suaad’s lawyers in Canada were successful in convincing a Federal Court to instruct the government to conduct DNA tests on her as scientific proof of her identity. It seems those Conservative Ministers had been clinging to an untenable position all along!

But the denials continued. On August 18th, the Prime Minister claimed “we” only learned of the case in mid August, even though he had been briefed on July 1, 2009. In the House of Commons, the Conservative Government fabricated new truths: that the case had never reached “political levels”, and that overworked consular officials handle some 500 such cases per week (that would be an average of about 2.5 a week per consular office worldwide) - so what, this one did!

Caught in a lie in the House of Commons during Question Period with questions referencing the ATIP’d documents, the government orchestrated a callous drive-by smear on Suaad - using selected press and media outlets - with innuendo and insinuation contained in an affidavit filed in Federal Court as a response to her Statement of claim.

That is the same affidavit rendered useless and irrelevant by the DNA tests in August. It had been prepared in an attempt to substitute for personal testimony in Kenyan court. But the Kenyans rejected this attempt to undermine a fundamental tenet of legal rights: the accuser has the right to face and cross-examine her accuser.

Does Steven Harper think Canadian Courts can be more easily intimidated? For how long can we tolerate this behaviour from the country’s first citizen?