



For Immediate Release
August 21, 2009

Liberals call for public investigation into abandoned Canadians abroad

OTTAWA – As evidence mounts that the Harper Conservatives were aware of Suaad Mohamud’s case months before taking action, Liberal MPs are calling for a full and open accounting of the facts, including a review by an all-party parliamentary committee, into why the government has abandoned so many Canadians abroad.

“Canadians demand answers. Instead of demonizing our diplomats, we need to know why the Harper government forced Ms. Mohamud to endure such unfair treatment,” said Liberal Foreign Affairs Critic Bob Rae. “Why did a court have to order the Minister to determine her true identity, while she languished in a Kenyan prison? And why has another Canadian – Abdihakim Mohammed – suffered the same fate for three years?”

“The Prime Minister’s claim that ‘we became aware last week’ glosses over the fact that I first brought Ms. Mohamud’s case to Minister Cannon’s attention on June in an informal conversation on the floor of the House of Commons,” said Joe Volpe, Ms. Mohamud’s local MP. “From that point forward, the Minister allowed her to languish in Kenya until a federal court ordered her DNA be tested to prove her identity.”

After his staff spoke with Ms. Mohamud from Kenya on June 12th, Mr. Volpe followed up with written letters to Minister Cannon and the High Commission on June 18th. A July 23rd urgent request for a phone call and July 24th letter to Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan was not answered.

“Considering the litany of failed consular cases, the buck stops with the Prime Minister,” said Dan McTeague, Liberal Critic for Consular Affairs. “Stephen Harper’s penchant for controlling all of his ministers traces inaction by Ministers Cannon, Van Loan and Kenney right back to his office and his own pervasive ideology.”

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