

## - FORCED EXILE - CANADA ABANDONS CITIZENS -

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Any quick Google search of the words “Canada abandons citizens” will lead to stories that question Canada’s commitment to equality. Looking in-depth it can be noted that Canada’s Government has ignored, bullied, and outright denied the right of return to Canadian Citizens.

One such case was the mother of Suaad Hagi Mohamud, the Sudanese-Canadian separated from her 12-year-old son for over three months. Mohamud was told she didn’t bear a strong enough resemblance to her passport photo, and was left to languish in Kenya until a DNA test proved her relation to her son here in Toronto.

Another story we might have heard of would be that of Abousfian Abdelrazik, detained in Sudan at the request of Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) on an American ‘hunch’. In September 2009, Sandro Contenta reported for *Globalpost.com*, that Abdelrazik was arrested on the grounds “that U.S. officials suspected him of ties with Al Qaeda”. In fact Abdelrazik was there to visit his ailing mother. Over the course of six years he was imprisoned on multiple occasions, purportedly tortured, and barred from return – only to be released by Sudanese officials with no charges laid.

Additionally, for years, the Canadian Government denied him a temporary passport (his had expired while in jail), after having promised one in the case that he should secure a flight back to Canada. Finally, this summer he was allowed to return for the first time to Canada and his family,

after widespread and well documented public support of his ordeal. Since his return he has crossed the country retelling his story of forced exile and abuse.

These two are the more well-known stories - ‘ringing bells’ of recent newspaper headlines. Many others have been abandoned abroad on our Government’s watch, such as Abdihakim Mohamed, a Somali-Canadian autistic man who was separated from his mother while attempting to return from a doctor-recommended trip to his country of origin. Unjustly, the burden of proof had been shifted onto his mother who needed to prove her son was in fact hers, arguing against the claim from Canadian authorities that he was an ‘imposter’.

These cases are not isolated, but exemplary of the wide-sweep of the post-9/11 policy shift in North America. The results of such (in)actions, will include erosion in trust of government and Canada’s humanitarian reputation abroad, as well as expensive and exposing lawsuits over the breaking of Canada’s Constitution, and human rights violations of its citizens.

*Graham Engel is a student at WLU, interested in ethics, consequences, global systems, oppression, and pot, and looks forward to working in all those fields to some capacity.*

*Top Image: “There’s No Place Like Home” - Activists Across the Country organized to bring Abousfian Abdelrazik home. - [projectflyhome.org](http://projectflyhome.org)*