



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

---

CIMM • NUMBER 074 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

---

EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, March 26, 2013**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. David Tilson**



## Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Tuesday, March 26, 2013

•(0845)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC)):** Good morning, everyone. We'll call the meeting to order. This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, meeting number 74. It's Tuesday, March 26, 2013.

We are studying Mr. Shory's private member's bill, Bill C-425, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (honouring the Canadian Armed Forces).

We have quite a few guests here this morning. From the Muslim Canadian Congress, we have two representatives.

Salma Siddiqui, good morning to you. You're the president.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui (President, Muslim Canadian Congress):** Yes. Good morning.

**The Chair:** And Tahir Gora, the secretary general, is here.

**Mr. Tahir Gora (Secretary General, Muslim Canadian Congress):** Good morning.

**The Chair:** You know I'm going to mess up all the pronunciations, and you'll just have to live with me on that.

Good morning to both of you.

We have Professor Grazia Scoppio from Queen's.

**Professor Grazia Scoppio (Associate Professor, Canadian Defence Academy and Royal Military College of Canada, Department of National Defence, As an Individual):** Good morning. It's RMC, sir.

**The Chair:** The Royal Military College—there it is, right there—the Canadian Defence Academy and the Royal Military College of Canada, Department of National Defence. Good morning to you, Professor.

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Finally, we have the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at. Is that pronunciation close?

**Mr. Asif Khan (National Secretary for Public Relations, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at):** It's "Ahmadiyya".

**The Chair:** Okay.

From it, we have Asif Khan, the national secretary for public relations, and Imtiaz Ahmed, a missionary and the public relations director for the Ottawa region.

Good morning to you, gentlemen.

**Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed (Missionary and Public Relations Director, Ottawa Region, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at):** Good morning.

**The Chair:** Each group will have up to 10 minutes to make a presentation.

We will start with you, Mr. Khan.

**Mr. Asif Khan:** Good morning.

Honourable Chair, members of Parliament, colleagues, and special guests, I am honoured to be with you today to discuss this private member's bill, Bill C-425, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (honouring the Canadian Armed Forces). My name is Asif Khan, as mentioned, and I'm the national secretary of public relations for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at. Today I will speak to the importance and validity of Bill C-425 from the perspective of an Ahmadiyya Muslim.

I am an Ahmadiyya Muslim who has lived his entire life as a proud Canadian and a devoted Muslim. First and foremost, I can tell you that Islam is categorical and explicit in teaching Muslims that loyalty to one's country of residence, the land that provides for a person's livelihood and fosters their hopes and dreams, is an important tenet of faith.

The prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace be upon him, once stated that love for one's homeland is part of one's faith, so it is on the precept of this guidance from the founder of Islam himself that Ahmadiyya Muslims have such deep regard for the country we live in.

Further to this, His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the current worldwide spiritual head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, has further elaborated on this noble precept by guiding Ahmadiyya Muslims all over the world with the following words. I will quote what he says:

As citizens of any country, we Ahmadi Muslims, will always show absolute love and loyalty to the State. Every Ahmadi Muslim has a desire for his chosen country to excel and should always endeavour towards this objective.

About Canada in particular, His Holiness echoed the sentiments of all Canadian Ahmadiyya Muslims during his recent tour of Canada this past summer when he stated, "I say without hesitation that the 'water and earth' of Canada certainly contains high moral values and loyalty." He also repeated a prayer from our fourth Khalifa that I will quote: "that the whole world becomes Canada and Canada becomes the whole world".

Despite the 200 countries that Ahmadis are now living in, serving and building communities wherever they go, the Canadian government is at the forefront in helping Ahmadis become a key part of the fabric that weaves this country together. Whether it's Prime Minister Harper attending the opening of our mosque in Calgary, the largest in Canada, or the government's decision to announce the Office of Religious Freedom at our headquarters in Vaughan, we have felt the embrace of our nation in our home, which is Canada.

This serves as a heartbreaking reminder and joy for us, because many Ahmadi Muslims have migrated to Canada in fleeing bitter persecution in Pakistan. Ahmadis there are legislatively sanctioned with actual amendments to the Pakistan constitution declaring us non-Muslims and setting harsh penalties of imprisonment and even death merely for practising our faith.

Canada has been a haven for Ahmadi Muslims, making our love for this country all the stronger. This is why we are at the forefront in giving back to our country and serving our communities. We are one of the largest partners for the Canadian Blood Services. We raise over 100,000 pounds of food for the less fortunate here each year. We hold community cleanups across Canada. We hold hospital fundraisers. We have earned the respect and appreciation of the leaders and public figures of every community we reside in, but our love for this country goes far beyond this, and it is this love that demands we Ahmadi Muslims uphold the sanctity of Canadian citizenship to the utmost.

Canadian citizenship is a great blessing and a gift whose importance and purity must be protected and preserved. That is why it is crucial that the Canadian government possess the power to strip Canadian citizenship from all such dual citizens who are convicted and confirmed in committing acts of war against the Canadian Armed Forces. If our government does not possess this right, then how can we deter such would-be transgressors against the state from committing acts that threaten the security of this country? It is only just that those who undermine the value of their Canadian citizenship enough to wage war against the state should also thereby forfeit their right to that very citizenship, a citizenship that so many countless millions are in search of yet is so disregarded by such troublemakers.

● (0850)

But this bill is about more than those who commit war against the state. Ultimately, this bill leads to granting the government the right to strip citizenship from any dual citizens who are convicted of terrorism. To this point, His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, spoke this past summer, even before the motion for this bill. He said:

For the entire world to become Canada we must keep a vigilant eye on all forms of extremism and extremists.

In so doing, His Holiness recognized, even led the way, in informing Canadians about the need to protect from the threat of extremism. But why should we only worry about such problems after the fact?

Extremism must be rooted out before it even festers in the first place. It should never happen to begin with.

Regarding this, His Holiness advised the government in the same address with the following words:

I would like to draw your attention towards one matter in particular. The Government should be aware that it is quite possible for certain extremist elements to enter the country on the pretext of benefiting from the various investment opportunities or schemes of the Government. This risk should be kept in view by the policy makers when determining future immigration and investment policies.

He went on to say:

Therefore, no doubt the eyes and glances of those who hold extremist ideologies are cast upon this country. It is not necessary that they will conduct a large-scale terrorist attack, but instead they may take a more subtle approach, whereby they will seek to gradually spread their hate-filled ideologies upon entering the country. Certainly, one common and relatively easy way of entering the country is on the pretext of business, trade and investment.

Now it could be argued that the various changes to the immigration processes have made immigration to Canada more difficult, and it would appear odd that an ethnic and religious community would support such changes and possibly more in the future. However, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is utterly against all forms of terrorism and extremism, and supports wholeheartedly any policy that protects the principle of loyalty to Canada.

We realize that it would perhaps make immigration applications more stringent for acceptance to Canada for members of our community and others. However, Canada must protect the reputation and the generosity this great country affords to those who get to call it their home. Our utmost priority is the safety and progress of Canada, even if it means that members of our own community find it difficult to immigrate here.

In closing, I return to the proposed bill C-425 and end this endorsement to protect the sanctity of Canadian citizenship with some humble words of caution. I can tell you that more than anything, along with our values of tolerance and plurality, Canada is defined by its qualities of justice, fairness, and due process.

So in empowering the state to strip citizenship from dual citizens who commit acts of war and potentially acts of terror against Canada, the Government of Canada must ensure that individuals are not even accused, let alone convicted, of such acts lightly. The bill and its accompanying rules should be carefully drafted. It would be tragic and not the intent of the bill if an innocent citizen were to suffer due to a hurried decision or an improper investigation.

How these measures are set up I leave to the able-minded policy-makers of our government. Our final advice would be that due process, full investigation, and the highest standards of fairness, care, and consideration be exhibited in exercising a power that allows for the removal of this most precious and sacred gift we call citizenship.

Long live Canada and thank you for your time.

● (0855)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Khan, for your kind words regarding Canada. We certainly appreciate your remarks.

Our second witness is Professor Scoppio, associate professor at the Royal Military College.

Good morning to you, and you have up to 10 minutes.

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me. I am an associate professor at the Canadian Defence Academy and the Royal Military College. I have been asked to appear as an individual based on my expertise, and I will be speaking on my own behalf and not on behalf of the Department of National Defence.

I have conducted research in Canada and elsewhere on immigrant integration and organizational diversity including that in military organizations and the Canadian Forces. I will focus my comments on the first part of Bill C-425, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act, specifically on the subsection that refers to reducing by one year the required years of residence in Canada of any permanent resident who is a member of the Canadian armed forces, who has signed a minimum three-year contract, and who has completed basic training.

The intended outcome of the above-mentioned amendment is somewhat unclear. If the intent is simply to expedite the citizenship process of a few select immigrants who happen to have unique skills to fulfill a special need of the Canadian Forces, then the bill, if passed, will be accomplishing this outcome and will result in a small-scale impact.

If however, the intent is to open the door of the Canadian Forces to greater numbers of qualified landed immigrants with permanent residence in order to provide, “new Canadians with more pathways to integration”, as stated by Mr. Shory who presented the bill when he appeared before this committee, then the bill on its own will not accomplish this broader outcome.

This proposed amendment to the Citizenship Act will likely impact a very small number of individuals since the number one advertised requirement to join the Canadian Forces is Canadian citizenship. Only occasionally the Canadian Forces recruit non-citizens. As the committee learned in a previous hearing, only about 60 personnel in the Canadian Forces are non-Canadian Citizens with permanent residency status, or about 15 on average yearly.

Roughly, this will represent less than 0.5% of the Canadian Forces' yearly planned intake. The policy that established Canadian Forces enrolment requirements is found in the Queen's Regulations and Orders, QR and O, chapter six, which states:

In order to be eligible for enrolment in the Canadian Forces as an officer or non-commissioned member, a person must:

(a) be a Canadian citizen, except that the Chief of the Defence Staff or such officer as he may designate may authorize the enrolment of a citizen of another country if he is satisfied that a special need exists and that the national interest will not be prejudiced thereby.

As illustrated, there are exceptions to the citizenship requirement to join the Canadian Forces; however, these exceptions are few and not widely advertised. As well, it should be noted that there are additional challenges and significant delays to obtaining a security clearance for any applicant whether he or she is a Canadian Citizen or foreign national who has resided abroad. I was one of them, so I know.

For the great majority of Canadian Forces occupations, the required security clearance is Level II, Secret. Therefore, should the actual intent be to open the Canadian Forces recruiting door to qualified immigrant men and women who are permanent residents,

the bill on its own will not accomplish this outcome. Rather, relevant policies would have to be amended to allow more newcomers to apply and join the Canadian Forces. These potential policy changes will likely result in increasing the diversity of the Canadian Forces membership, since currently the Canadian Forces do not reflect the cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity of Canadian society.

At the same time, it would be important to consider interrelated issues such as security clearance—which I spoke about—official language ability, and foreign credentials, to name a few. As well, it would be informative to review the policies and processes in place in other militaries that recruit non-citizens, such as the United States of America and, more recently, Australia.

• (0900)

In conclusion, I am in favour of the proposed subsection of the bill regarding expediting citizenship requirements of permanent residents who are members of the Canadian Armed Forces. This would be a positive step. However, as it stands, the impact of this amendment to the Citizenship Act on new immigrants would not be significant, as they are, by and large, not eligible to join the Canadian Forces.

If a wider impact is envisioned, other relevant policies would have to be amended accordingly to allow greater numbers of qualified future Canadian citizens to join the Canadian Forces, thus providing them with “more pathways to integration”.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my perspective.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Scoppio. We appreciate your comments.

Our final witness is from the Muslim Canadian Congress.

Ms. Siddiqui, good morning to you.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Good morning.

Mr. Chair, members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, I am here today to speak to you not only as the president of the Muslim Canadian Congress but also, and more importantly, as a proud Canadian.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my colleague, Tahir Gora, who serves as the secretary general of the Muslim Canadian Congress.

Canadians are known around the world for being honest, polite, fair, and brokers of peace. We wear the maple leaf proudly on our backpacks while travelling, and we have heard stories of others sewing the flag on theirs in order to enjoy the same benefits, the benefits that come with being a Canadian.

Our global reputation is a great source of pride for all Canadians, but it also comes with great responsibility. I came to this country in 1967, many years ago, from Pakistan. My country of birth was experiencing much hardship. My parents, like any other parents, wanted the best for their children. They brought us to safety and security in this country.

What happened next is what makes Canada so great. My experience is the embodiment of immigrant experience. Nothing came easy to us. We worked, and worked very hard. With that hard work, doors opened, opportunities came. It is with great pride that I say we successfully built businesses here, and it is the same experience for my colleague, Tahir Gora.

I know countless others from all over the world who have shared the immigrant experience in Canada. We all know that in this increasingly globalized, competitive world, we will continue to need immigrants of all stripes to spur our economy, to foster innovation, and to contribute, as have many countless millions before them, to building a strong and more prosperous Canada. The stellar reputation of Canada is one through which we can recruit the world's best and brightest. It is for this reason that I am here today.

Ladies and gentlemen, our reputation is under attack. Some Canadians use that very citizenship, and the passports that come with it, to engage in activities that are nothing short of being absolutely contradictory to our Canadian values. We have heard stories of Canadians being involved in terrorist activities in different hot spots throughout the world. Some have killed. Others have trained or are training known terrorist groups, and they continue to plot attacks against our interests and those of our allies. Indeed, it is an affront to our men and women in uniform, who protect Canadian values around the world, that they should have to confront violence perpetrated by opportunistic and disloyal Canadians.

Those of us who lived through the 1980s remember well the damage done to Canada's reputation by acts of Sikh terrorism. Recent news about Canadian citizens involved in terrorist acts in Algeria, Bulgaria, and with Al-Shabaab in Somalia should disturb us all. The flow of young Canadians to terrorist training camps around the world is indeed a matter of concern. We cannot allow this to continue.

Canadians who are opposed to the values of our society should not be allowed to abuse the privileges that come with holding Canadian citizenship. We must act to strip Canadian citizenship from those who seek to exploit it for violent and illegal activities.

Bill C-425 seeks to strip Canadian citizenship from dual nationals engaged in violent disloyalty to Canada. The Muslim Canadian Congress supports this bill. We remember all too well how frustrating it was for us to be painted by some in the U.S. media as a safe haven for terrorists, as a place where terrorists could come to exploit the very judicial system that they seek to destroy for their own means. It is for this reason that we must support this legislation and demonstrate that no one shall be permitted to spill blood under our name.

• (0905)

I have heard concerns that Bill C-425 represents a major reaction or that it serves a "political process". I disagree. Bill C-425 represents an assertion of the pride we hold in our values of an open, liberal democracy where our freedoms are applied to all.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must be reasonable. We cannot allow those with violent aspirations to proceed to attack us, our interests and those of our allies, and to do so while using a flag under the

banner that provides them the freedom and mobility to participate in these violent, hateful, and cowardly acts.

In closing, I would like to thank you for this opportunity and would ask that you support the passage of Bill C-425. It is an essential step in all of us taking a stand, that "we stand on guard for thee".

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you to all of you for your presentations and comments. They've been very helpful.

The members of the committee will now have a series of questions and comments to make to you. On this side, we have the members of the opposition; on the other side, we have the government.

Our first questions come from Ms. James.

• (0910)

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to all our guests. It was certainly wonderful to hear your viewpoints on this particular bill. It was refreshing to hear all the witnesses here testify similarly to their beliefs.

Last year Citizenship and Immigration actually embarked on revoking the citizenships of those who had obtained citizenship fraudulently here in Canada through residency fraud. I actually contacted my constituents in Scarborough Centre. I sent out information letting them know about it and asked for their feedback. There was overwhelming support of what citizenship holds in this country, but there was this underlying commonality in the responses that I received. I had many—and when I say many, I mean hundreds of—responses came back. People were concerned about the fact that people in this country were committing terrorism, involved in training camps and so on and still retained their citizenship. There was a request that actually said that we should be revoking citizenship of those who commit acts of terror, who plot to destroy what citizenship holds—the "true north strong and free".

We're all proud to be Canadian, and I believe I heard from both groups here today that you are in agreement with that statement. Someone who plots to destroy Canada—what it means to be Canadian—democracy and freedom, should not be able to retain their citizenship if they are dual citizens.

Do you agree with that statement?

**Mr. Asif Khan:** Correct.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Correct.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you.

There are critics of this bill, probably some within this committee today, who feel that citizenship is an unalienable right. They believe that once you are able to obtain it, no matter what you do to contradict the oath of citizenship, no matter what you do, you should be able to maintain it and stand behind it and hide behind it. Do you believe that's true? Once you have it should you have it for life?

**Mr. Asif Khan:** I don't know the views of the opposition. In regard to citizenship, if somebody were to get citizenship for Canada and drop their second citizenship, then what you're suggesting doesn't apply.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** That's correct.

**Mr. Asif Khan:** So again my remarks go back to more of the root of the issue. Let's make sure that we're protecting whomever we're letting into this country in the first place. Let's have stronger measures set up to root out those who could spread hate in this country so they are not able to obtain citizenship. So it's a moot fact if you're going to strip citizenship from a terrorist anyway.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** That's correct, and we cannot leave someone stateless. That's part of what we stand for, so this applies only to people who have obtained citizenship and when it's a dual citizenship situation. In fact, there have been many cases where someone has obtained citizenship and then has left this country, travelling on a Canadian passport. I think you mentioned that Canadian passports allow you to really travel freely in this world because Canadians are known for honesty, goodwill, and their stand on democracy and freedom. We've heard from other witnesses in this committee in previous sessions who have testified that they believe that a Canadian passport actually allows someone to more freely travel throughout the world and to plot and commit acts of terrorism.

Would you agree with that statement?

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** I definitely do agree and I think that we need to go a little beyond partisan politics, if I may put it that way. We should look at what effect it has on the majority of immigrants who have become Canadians and the fact that this does result in a backlash. It's a discussion for another time, but definitely, anybody who is holding dual citizenship and comes here just to use this passport, it really gives those who are working for Canada.... I believe I'm one of them, and we are here because we are supporting that. It definitely needs serious consideration.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you. Ms. Siddiqui, you mentioned some of the terrorist attacks that we've been hearing about recently. There was something in Bulgaria and, of course, Algeria not too long ago, and now there has been confirmation that there were two Canadians involved in that.

I'm from the Toronto area, Scarborough actually, and I think it was a real eye-opener not too long ago for people in Canada to learn about the Toronto 18 and the fact that there were training camps here in Ontario and that many members of that particular group were actually from the Scarborough area. It was a huge concern for my constituents.

Do you think that radicalization in Canada is a growing problem? I have to tell you, 10 to 15 years ago, we never heard about it.

• (0915)

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** It is a definite problem, and anyone who says this only might be a problem is living in a dream world. It is a definite problem. I was travelling to Dubai last year and I saw an imam from the Mississauga area bringing 18 or 19 young people for a retreat. I know very well what that retreat was and I'm not getting into maybes. The fact is, yes, it's a real threat, and we must look into it seriously.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** If someone comes here to Canada and seeks to obtain citizenship and then uses that citizenship to travel abroad to commit acts of terrorism, would you consider their citizenship fraudulent? After all, I've been to many ceremonies, and they take an oath of allegiance to Her Majesty and to this country to uphold our laws and values. Would you say that someone who sets out to obtain citizenship so that they can travel freely would be obtaining it in a fraudulent manner?

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Absolutely, and I think there have been weaknesses in our system.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** And do you feel that by letting people know, when they take that oath, that they will be stripped of their citizenship if they commit an act of terror or plot to destroy the very thing that Canadians hold dear, democracy and freedom in this country, it would send a clear message that Canada will not tolerate this type of activity in this country or abroad?

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** This is definitely a very clear message, and we hope this will resonate and that people will understand that there is a responsibility with that.

We cannot be politically correct in everything and it's not about political correctness, because at the end of the day, by being politically correct we are not doing service to the immigrants who have come here and are working in an honest manner. I'm not an immigrant. I've been here more than three quarters of my life, but the fact is, I'm still called an immigrant.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Sims.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Thank you very much.

I want to thank all representatives for coming here today, for presenting to us and giving us your perspectives, or the perspectives that your organizations hold, on the issue that we are here to discuss.

First, let me make it very, very clear that we fully support our military, our armed forces, reflecting the diversity of our population.

I've been a teacher most of my life. I have fought for that diversity in all institutions, including the teaching profession. I think we're better served when all our institutions represent the diversity so that all our kids—whether their roots are in Pakistan, whether their roots are in India or China, or wherever they are—see themselves reflected when they see the people who are either teaching them or working in the systems that we have.

So we are fully supportive of measures that would facilitate that kind of a diversity.

Second, let me also make it very clear that we think having Canadian citizenship is a privilege, especially for those of us who were not born in Canada.

I'm one of those. I am an immigrant to Canada. I actually made my husband promise that we were only coming for a year. That led to two years. And that led to me being here since 1975. So it's been a very, very long time.

I consciously chose Canada to be my home, as a place where I wanted to raise my children. I did that because I looked at the kind of standing Canada used to have internationally—I say “used” to have internationally—and saw the kind of cultural milieu that was here, and the beautiful geography, and thought, “What a wonderful place to raise my children.” Both of my children were born here.

Now that we've got this aside, I'll turn to the concerns and questions we have with this bill. I don't want them to be taken as partisan shots. These are legitimate concerns, where we play our role as the opposition and also as parliamentarians to look at legislation to make sure it serves the intent, and to make sure it does not go in such a sweeping way that it takes away rights, as well, from certain individuals who should not have their rights taken away.

It's with that perspective that I come at this bill, as do my colleagues.

With that in mind, my first question is to you, Professor Scoppio. I read your paper on diversity best practices in military organizations with great interest. As I said, that's something that's dear to my heart.

By the way, I would have been in the armed forces if I had been half an inch taller.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** But I failed my medical way back when, in a different country—in England.

At any rate, in that paper you discuss recommendations that would help the Canadian Forces shift from its current reactive approach to diversifying its recruits to a more proactive approach.

In your analysis, is clause 1 of Bill C-425 a reactive or proactive measure towards enhancing diversity in the Canadian Forces? Can you elaborate on how you would see the proactive approaches playing out?

• (0920)

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** Thank you for the question.

Yes, this part of the bill would be proactive. My point, however, was that on its own, it would only achieve a very small impact. The reason is that, by and large, non-citizens, even if they are permanent residents, are not eligible to apply.

You spoke to the intent. If the intent is to open the Canadian Forces recruiting door a little bit wider, then other related policies and processes need to be amended at the same time.

But by all means, yes, this is the first baby step, if you will, in a proactive way.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** I wasn't here for the testimony last week, due to illness, but I have read it. We heard from members of the Canadian Forces that clause 1 of this bill would actually apply to a very small number, as you have said, about 15. I come from Newton-North Delta, which is a very diverse community. When I look at the diversity of this amazing country and our population, I worry about this baby step being too tiny, because if we were to look at increments of 15 over the next number of years, how long is it going to take? When we look at reflecting our diversity in our

systems, especially in our military, I don't think we should wait that long. I do have that concern.

In your paper, Professor, you also wrote that core Canadian diversity values should be a fundamental component of the framework of Canadian Forces' leadership values. Further, you suggested that these values and competencies should apply to everyone in the organization, not only to existing majority groups but also to the new, so-called minority groups. In other words, individuals whose values and attitudes are in conflict with those of the organization will be expected to adapt to the organizational context.

Can you explain how the values or value compliance of a potential recruit might currently be measured or assessed?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** Right now the standard measure is the Canadian Forces' aptitude test. It's not really measuring those kinds of values. There are some organizations, for example, some police organizations, that are starting to look at psychometric measures to ensure that their recruits are, for example, not racist and things of that sort.

I don't believe that our standard test right now measures those kinds of values that I'm talking about, in terms of diversity—multiculturalism being one of them—and if they are necessarily a priority that's being measured.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor.

Mr. Lamoureux.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This bill, in my opinion, is accomplishing two things. First, I mentioned last week the establishment of two-tier citizenship. Now I have a letter that I believe all committee members have. It's from the Canadian Bar Association. I want to quote one part of it:

The Bill proposes to create two classes of citizens. Dual citizens would risk losing Canadian citizenship in certain unclearly defined circumstances, even if they were born in Canada and had lived their entire lives here. Citizens who do not have another nationality would not risk losing Canadian citizenship.

We're talking about a relatively small number. You could count on one hand, minus your thumb, the number of people this has affected over the last 50 years. Is it worth establishing two-tier citizenship? Would it be just as effective to say that if these individuals are found, there is another way of dealing with them? You could put them in prison, for example, and treat citizens equally.

I'm interested in very quick responses from Mr. Khan and Ms. Siddiqui.

• (0925)

**Mr. Asif Khan:** When you say that the number is minuscule or small, what is that number?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Less than four. It's been two or three people in the last 50 years—

**Mr. Asif Khan:** That are in fear of losing their citizenship?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** —that if this law were to pass, it would actually have impacted.



**Mr. Asif Khan:** I'm not sure that I understand that comment. Those who are extremists or terrorists tend to take pride in maintaining their citizenship in another country as well, whatever the country it may be.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** What I'm referring to, Mr. Khan, is whether we should allow two-tier citizenship as opposed to ensuring that there is a more direct consequence, equally applied, to our citizens. It could be prison or whatever it might be.

**Mr. Asif Khan:** I don't look at it as two-tier. I look at it as somebody who's an extremist or a terrorist who has violated Canadian values and who should be treated according to the law. If the law allows us to strip their citizenship, then so be it. That is how it should be.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** I am in agreement with him, and I also think that we have to look at it further. What impact does it have on people who are just getting into this radical mentality? We are reinforcing bad habits. Once we say this is not acceptable, it is not acceptable. You lose your citizenship.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Thank you.

Professor, last time the committee met, I asked questions regarding the number of landed immigrants who are members of the Forces. I was quite concerned in regard to the minimal number. Over the last decade, we have recruited maybe 40 to 60 individuals. There are many, including myself, who would argue that this bill will do absolutely nothing to address the issue of recruiting more landed immigrants. Do you find that this is a deficiency in government policy, in that it does not allow for more landed immigrants to become members of the Canadian Forces?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** I would say I still support the bill, because it is a step in the right direction. It's a question of policy, but it's also a question of the application of the policy. So the policy is the cure? No, but there are exceptions, and these exceptions are not widely advertised. Even when landed immigrants do apply, there is the big barrier of the security clearance. Why? Because the great majority of our occupations are labelled as high security, level 2. It's the secret level.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Do you think we would have better forces today if there were more landed immigrants?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** It's not a question of being better; it's a question of opening the door so that everybody has an equal opportunity to apply if they are qualified for the job.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** You're familiar with what this bill will be extending to members of the Forces. Would you think this would be practical for landed immigrants who want to become RCMP officers, or police officers, or other security jobs outside the Canadian Forces?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** I don't know what their recruiting practices are, so I can't speak to that. I can tell you that on the Canadian Forces' recruiting site, it is not very well advertised that permanent residents who are not citizens can apply for specific jobs if they have a specific skill set. I don't know how the RCMP, or other local police forces, or provincial police advertise.

• (0930)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Scoppio.

Mr. Opitz.

**Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Professor, I was just reading some of your material here. You say that more effort is needed to ensure that organizational culture is conducive to having a diverse membership.

Can you explain what you mean by that?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understand your question.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** You said more effort is needed to ensure that organizational culture is conducive to having a diverse membership in the Canadian Forces.

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** When we are opening the door to diversity, it's really key that the organization be ready to not just accept the diversity—whether it's gender or culture, religious or linguistic—but to also embrace it and make it part of the team. So if I have a diverse team, as a leader I need to be able to understand their culture. I need to be able to tap into the diversity that each member brings in. The idea is that somebody needs to make a decision, and it's a two-way process. As your colleague said, when the diverse member comes in, they need to understand that the organization has its own values. In the Canadian Forces, we value command structure. So if your commanding officer is a female and you are a male, you need to be okay with that, for example.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** I would submit that this is already happening in a lot of cases, especially in reserve regiments, because they're in urban centres. In fact, in my regiment, at one point we counted 18 different ethnic groups, languages, religions. Everybody was embraced and everybody was part of the team. In fact, I trained some of the first women for combat in combat roles. There was a lot of diversity in those units. I recognized at the time that the regular force, because of where they were located, would typically lag behind in some of that. But I think they have largely caught up. Wouldn't you agree?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** I would say that the Canadian Forces have made a lot of progress. My comments are basically geared towards our being more proactive to increase that diversity. If we're looking at the numbers—since you're bringing up numbers—visible minorities make up 5% of the total force overall. That does not compare at all to the workforce diversity that we have. If we look at gender diversity, we're talking about 15%. These numbers will not increase very fast any time soon, unless we take more proactive measures.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** What would you recommend? I think the Canadian Forces reach out very broadly and very aggressively to recruit and attract everybody.

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** There are a lot of efforts, you're correct. If we look at the advertising, they're trying to make sure there are females, visible minorities, and all kinds of diversity. These are all great steps, but at the end of the day, it has to go from the attraction, recruiting, retention.... It's a process.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** But that's for any recruit.

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** You can't force a recruit through the door, no matter who they are. The military isn't for everybody, for every individual. It's a calling.

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** You have to be there and you really want to do that. I don't care where you come from, it's a mindset that you have to be part of.

I just want to shift gears a little bit and talk about radicalization of youth in Canada. Do you work on any of that at RMC?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** No, this is not my area of expertise. That's why I did not speak to that, sir.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Okay.

Do you have any opinions on that, though?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** They would just be my personal opinion, not based on my research. So I don't think I would be informing this committee any further than my colleagues.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Okay. I'm good.

**The Chair:** Are you finished?

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Yes.

**The Chair:** You still have three minutes. Anyone?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Thanks, Chair.

Taking the point of Mr. Opitz, maybe Salma and Asif could comment on the whole idea of the radicalization of youth and what happens as a result. You spoke to it somewhat, Asif, in your opening comments, about the trend where young people are trained and radicalized in order to stand up for, defend, or promote terrorism and who somehow consider that to be an honour.

We had the RCMP and CSIS here at our last meeting and it was a little bit more difficult for them to give us pertinent details about certain cases. Mr. Lamoureux stated that there were four cases to his understanding. We actually heard from them that there have been 15 such cases over the last number of years. Obviously the youth are convinced or conscripted into this, and I wondered about your thoughts on that and how it impacts the bill.

• (0935)

**Mr. Asif Khan:** Are you asking if I think radicalization is on the rise? Is that the question?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Yes.

**Mr. Asif Khan:** I'm not privy to those CSIS reports, but if they're saying that it's happening and they have findings that it is happening, I would suggest that it's probably a lot more than what they found because where there's one that you can even find, there are many that you cannot find. It is prevalent. I wouldn't say that it's radically increasing, but it is prevalent and it is a concern of the Canadian government to make sure that it's rooted out.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Salma?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chairperson.

I believe what Mr. Dykstra is referring to is the amendments that the minister is talking about and terrorists in general, whereas my questioning was strictly in regard to the bill and threats against the Canadian Forces when I talked about there being fewer than five such cases. I say this just so that we're clear on that.

**The Chair:** Listening to the minister's comments, I think we're pretty well letting anything go. We haven't seen the amendment yet, but just from listening to his comments, I have a feeling that they're going to be fairly broad. So we're letting pretty well anything go.

Mr. Dykstra, you're back on.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I'd like to hear from Salma now.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Are you asking if radicalization is on the increase?

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Yes.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Again, I definitely think it is, and it's becoming fashionable to see.... It's peer pressure. It definitely is, and I think if some people are given a clear indicator that it's not acceptable, hopefully we will see some changes.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** One discussion that comes up on a regular basis is the whole issue that a dual citizen is the only one who would face the risk of losing Canadian citizenship. It would seem to me that you could actually take this from a different perspective, which is that the only person who actually can risk losing citizenship is one who wants to use Canadian citizenship as a vehicle to transfer oneself to another country to train or to commit a terrorist act. I want to get your thoughts on that specifically. Would it not seem more likely that dual citizens would potentially use their Canadian citizenship to protect themselves and therefore train, and that this would potentially lead to a terrorist act, versus someone who only has Canadian citizenship?

**The Chair:** You are way over, Mr. Dykstra.

A very brief answer from just one of you, because we are over the time.

**Mr. Asif Khan:** I think the answer is yes, but that's not to say that only dual citizens of other countries can be terrorists. There are people who can be terrorists here too, who are born and raised here, so let's not just paint everyone with the same brush.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame Groguhé.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would first like to thank our witnesses for being here today.

If you don't mind, before I begin my questions, I would like to respond to the letter that we have received from Trisha Mitrocsak.

I would like to remind the members of the committee that our comments can truly have an impact on those who hear them. When a member of Parliament refers to immigrants as bad apples, that has consequences. When another MP can't stop talking about terrorism and radicalization in relation to immigration, that can also have consequences. Make no mistake about it. I could talk at length about the consequences. I have seen the real impact of those comments in a society that claims to be united. Some of our comments can go beyond the context of our speeches and can make people react. Those people don't know all the ins and outs of everything we discuss in committee. As a matter of fact, that can really make people have a feeling of rejection and create division in our society.

I simply wanted to alert all the members, including those of our party, and ask them to tone down their comments, to exercise sound judgment at all times when they say something and to avoid stigmatizing people.

I will continue with my questions.

● (0940)

[English]

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I have no idea what Sadia is talking about. I'm not sure how it relates to our committee. I have no idea how it relates to the questions we are asking here. A speech in the House of Commons is fine, but I'm not sure this relates at all to what we are talking about this morning.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé:** Mr. Chair, allow me...

[English]

**The Chair:** Let's put it this way. She said it, and we're now going to hear a question.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé:** That's fine.

My question is for all of you.

We have all seen the impact of the 2001 attacks on the Muslim community. The impact was really strong and is still being felt today. No matter what passport the people of the Muslim community use to cross the border, they are still being stigmatized and singled out.

In your view, will Bill C-425 have a similar impact on those types of situations and on the prevention of terrorist acts?

[English]

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** I'm a little confused, but I'll try to answer as much as I possibly can.

In 2001, 9/11 had an impact on everyone. The fact is, yes, the Muslim community was impacted, but we also stood up and said we were not going to defend what some minority of Muslims had done. This bill would have a very positive impact in the sense that people will know that this loyalty is not tolerated by anyone. It's not just the Muslims. It's not based on religion or ethnicity. It is across the board. The fact is, that makes it much harder for people to buy into it.

We can talk about many things. We can talk about what happened with the security certificates and how it impacted us, because everybody said, these people are coming and they are destroying our

country. It's a two-way dialogue and we need much more time than this. I would love to appear and talk about the experiences that elders have had because of this. They see their religion as being taken and hijacked. The impact is not given in one minute. Maybe we can be allowed to come again and talk about the impact. I think this is positive.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé:** Okay.

I will continue with my second question. One word in your answer caught my attention; you talked about a minority of people. I think it is important to go back to the concept of minority. Quite clearly, it is out of the question to extend this concept to all immigrants and communities.

Here is my second question.

We are really concerned about the two-tiered citizenship that this bill could create. Obviously...

[English]

**The Chair:** You're over your time, so please hurry. Go ahead.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé:** Okay.

That can also create concerns for immigrants.

Given that this bill applies to people who have dual citizenship and there are a lot more naturalized Canadians who have dual citizenship, do you think that this bill is discriminatory to some extent?

● (0945)

[English]

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Your question has several answers, if I may say so.

First of all, I don't see it as two-tier, as Asif has said.

**The Chair:** We have time for one.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** One answer? Okay. Then you should have stopped her, with all due respect, because I'm not going to be able to answer the whole question.

**The Chair:** I understand that. My problem is to control the time and we're well over.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Okay. I hope that's not being taken from my one minute.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Let me answer, with all due respect, sir.

**The Chair:** You've already got a minute, but go ahead.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** Thank you so much.

The fact is, if we are talking about a minority we don't have to be afraid of anything. The minority that chooses to do this is doing harm to us, too. As we have said, it's not going to have an impact because it is a minority doing it. We don't want it to become a majority. That goes not only for the Muslim community, but it goes for every community. We have Sikhs who are into that. We have the Irish. We have everybody. It's not a matter of just the Muslim community.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Leung.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to finish a thought that was brought up earlier regarding radicalization. His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad cautioned political leaders in Canada to be vigilant in screening out who we let into the country so that we can protect ourselves against the entry of extremism.

I want to take a look at the other side. In order to first understand radicalization, we need to understand it from their side, why they would want to perpetuate something like this, that is, terrorist acts and so on against any country.

Perhaps you can share your thoughts with us on what you see as the need on the part of a particular Muslim extremist group to commit acts of terrorism.

**Mr. Asif Khan:** It could take a long time to answer that question, in the sense that there are probably many reasons.

I'll simply state it as this: the Ahmadiyya community really adheres to the concept that Islam means peace. Unfortunately, those Muslims who are creating this havoc are not following that concept of what Islam is. For whatever reason, those ideologies are setting in and it's creating hate towards the western world. If they were to go back to the root of Islam, these problems would not be there.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Is there any truth, in fact, that there are people who pursue the jihad, the holy war, and antagonisms against the west because of our way of life and so on?

**Mr. Asif Khan:** Unfortunately, there are various interpretations that these radicals have taken. They have ill feelings towards our way of life over here, our foreign policies, or whatever it might be, which is unfortunate. But again that isn't the concept in Islam, and it shouldn't be.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** If a young person who is born in a Muslim country comes to Canada and lives here with the benefits of this country, why would he want to turn against us?

**Mr. Asif Khan:** I think you're asking to me to give reasons as to why one should hate Canada. Again, as an Ahmadi Muslim brought up and trained as an Ahmadi, I just cannot fathom those reasons. It's just an unfortunate circumstance. It's evil thought. For lack of a better word, it's idiots teaching these people wrong ideas and ideologies.

When I made those comments that caution needs to be taken prior to letting someone into this country, it's because those ideologies are making themselves prevalent. We need to root those out. We need to make sure that doesn't happen.

The whole concept of jihad... As unfortunate as 9/11 was, our definition of jihad is not a jihad by the sword but jihad by the pen. It's a peaceful jihad. That's been our definition in the Ahmadi Muslim community. We're very grateful that most of the Muslim world is now starting to adopt our definition. We just hope that it will spread further and that these extremist camps, wherever they are, will start to understand this point as well.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Let me come back to the question. When MP Shory, appearing in committee as a witness, first introduced the bill, he stated that he would be open to amendments to strengthen this bill. What is your suggestion as to how this bill would be improved?

• (0950)

**Mr. Asif Khan:** I'm not a career bureaucrat. I don't craft bills. But what I would suggest, as I did when I made my comments and His Holiness did in his cautionary comments as well, is just to be careful to make sure that we never make this applicable to somebody who is innocent or never do something that would create strife for an individual who is not a bona fide terrorist or extremist. Whatever those provisions are, however bills are crafted, there should be careful consideration.

**Mr. Chungsen Leung:** Are there any comments from Madam Siddiqui?

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** I think that question should be left to the people we've elected and our judiciary. If there any amendments—and I've heard from member Shory that he's open to some—I will leave it at that, because I'm not an expert on that.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I think there are two things that shouldn't be missed here. The first is that Mr. Shory sits next to me in the House and I'm going to take credit for everything good about this bill.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. John Weston:** The second thing is that we've heard some very remarkable statements by both Mr. Khan and Ms. Siddiqui.

I've gone a little deeper. I noticed on your Muslim Canadian Congress' website that it says that "We believe that fanaticism and extremism within the Muslim community is a major challenge to all of us. We stand opposed to the extremists and will present the more humane and tolerant face of our community." I assume you adopt those comments.

Mr. Khan, you said this morning that your community is against all forms of terrorism and extremism and that it supports any policy that protects the principle of loyalty to Canada. Whether we are Christians or Jews or we subscribe to any other community in this country, your condemnation of fanaticism and extremism is a really powerful statement which I hope will be crowed from the rooftops. It is a wonderful consequence of my colleague Mr. Shory introducing this bill that we have this commentary.

I wonder if you could just comment on how deeply held this conviction is in each of your communities.

**Mr. Asif Khan:** Just two days ago, we held a peace conference in London, in the United Kingdom, where His Holiness made an address speaking to these points. The newly appointed Ambassador for Religious Freedom, Andrew Bennett, was actually present and made a comment there as well.

We are continually doing events such as this. We do interface symposiums in Canada, and we've conducted about 200 to 300 of them across the country. Many of the topics are along the lines of generating peace within society, eradicating extremism, and taking measures for world peace. We will always speak for this, and we will never stop. We hope that we will have world peace one day.

**Mrs. Salma Siddiqui:** What you have read is what we are standing for. We are speaking out. We're not a large group like the Ahmadiyya, but the fact is that our message is resonating. We get a lot of opposition.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask both sides to look at what we are doing at the Muslim Canadian Congress, a small group but a group that has a voice. Please let's look at having non-partisan support. Let's not look at political correctness the way we have come to know it today, because it only impacts people who want peace. One group goes and talks to some so-called leaders and their wrong habits get reinforced, for example at the conference that took place in Toronto where, if I may say, Prime Minister Harper's message went in...and Justin Trudeau actually appeared as a keynote speaker.

Let's look at where we are going, not just for political correctness, but that we are there for everybody. We're looking for help from the politicians, so keep your doors open to us, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** Thank you for your comments.

I am going to ask this question again. In terms of the bill, what recommendations can you give us to promote loyalty to Canadian citizenship? What else can we do in terms of the citizenship oath that people take when they become Canadian citizens?

Would you like to comment on that, Mr. Khan?

● (0955)

[English]

**Mr. Asif Khan:** The majority of people who are coming to this country are loyal to the country, and Canada's doing a wonderful job of promoting that. I think it just speaks to the fact that everybody who could possibly apply and become a Canadian citizen from different parts of the world would love to do so. I don't think we have any issues in promoting these concepts of loyalty to the country.

Unfortunately, it's just some prevailing forces on the other side that are creating the issue. I don't think there's anything more that we can do to the oath or anything else that will attack those ideologies.

**The Chair:** Ms. Sitsabaiesan, you have the final word.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here.

Professor Scoppio, you were talking about the impact or the effect on the Canadian armed forces and that it would be such a small number of people who would be impacted by this bill. When Mr. Mr. Shory introduced it, he said that it was to try to accomplish a state of being able to increase diversity within our Canadian Forces. You mentioned that it probably won't really accomplish that because of the statistics we got last week from the officials from the forces, which indicated that only about 15 people per year would be affected.

If this bill were to be enacted, do you think the Canadian Forces could actually end up creating positions that are specifically for permanent residents and—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but we have a point of order. Stop the clock.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** I just heard the member opposite say that my colleague, Devinder Shory, had said something about the intent of this bill that I actually don't recall his saying its purpose was. I'm raising this now because I'm sitting here and don't recall that being said.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** I have no idea.

Proceed.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was just quoting the quote that you had cited today.

My question, again, in case you missed it, was do you think the Canadian Forces could actually end up creating positions that are specifically for permanent residents? Would it be targeting permanent residents by creating new positions within the Canadian Forces to accomplish some of the goals here?

**Prof. Grazia Scoppio:** To be fair, what Mr. Shory actually said in his speech—which I listened to a recording of—was that the bill would provide new Canadians with more pathways to integration.

To answer your question, I can't speak on behalf of the department, but I'm not aware of positions being created for any specific group. In fact, if we go to the intent of the Employment Equity Act, it is not to have targets and not to.... It's very different from affirmative action, which would be something like what you are talking about. There are no quotas to fill. There are goals. So we, as an organization, strive to achieve those goals, but there are no quotas to achieve.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Okay.

Jinny, do you want the rest of my time?

**The Chair:** Well, I have one more thing to do, so I'm going to stop the questions for now.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Okay.

**The Chair:** I want to thank all the witnesses for coming. You've made a good contribution to our deliberations on this bill. We thank you for your thoughts and insight.

The witnesses are excused, although I have a brief matter for the committee to consider. I have alerted the two critics and the parliamentary secretary.

As you know, we changed our schedule for April 18, which will result in our starting the clause by clause on Tuesday, April 23. Therefore, we need to change the motion we made some time ago that outlined the deadline to submit amendments, in order to reflect that change.

**The motion that I am suggesting, which I'd like someone to move, is as follows:**

That, notwithstanding the motion adopted on Thursday, February 28, 2013, the amendments to the Bill be submitted to the clerk in both official languages forty-eight (48) hours before beginning clause-by-clause consideration, that is, before 3:30 p.m. on Friday, April 19, 2013, and that these amendments be distributed to members in both official languages as soon as possible on Monday, April 22, 2013.

Do I have a mover for that motion?

• (1000)

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Is there discussion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

• (1000)

(Pause)

• (1000)

• (1005)

**The Chair:** We will now reconvene.

I thank you for not listening to me when I adjourned instead of suspended the meeting. I'm glad you all know what's going on in this committee.

Our second witness for the day will be here for 45 minutes.

We're honoured to have you here, sir.

Mr. Furio De Angelis is the representative in Canada for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. With him is an associate legal officer, Nadia Williamson.

Welcome to both of you.

Mr. De Angelis, you have up to eight minutes to make your presentation. Thank you for coming.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis (Representative in Canada, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees):** Thank you very much, Mr. Tilson.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, honourable members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration for inviting me to participate in the debate on Bill C-425, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (honouring the Canadian Armed Forces).

We are pleased to have the opportunity to talk to the committee about this bill in relation to the issue of statelessness. However, before I begin, I would like to briefly introduce UNHCR's role and mandate in terms of statelessness.

UNHCR's responsibilities to stateless persons first started with refugees without any nationality, under the UNHCR Statute and the

1951 refugee convention, both of which refer to stateless persons who meet the criteria of the definition of a refugee.

[English]

Following the adoption of the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, UNHCR's mandated responsibilities concerning statelessness were expanded.

The General Assembly's resolution in 1974 and 1976 designated UNHCR as the body mandated to examine the cases of persons who claim the benefit of the 1961 convention, and to assist such persons in presenting their claim to the appropriate national authorities.

Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly's resolution in 1995 and subsequent resolutions confer upon UNHCR a global mandate for the identification, prevention, and reduction of statelessness, and for the international protection of stateless persons.

UNHCR'S stateless mandate includes prevention of statelessness. As a result, it is not limited to addressing cases of statelessness which have already occurred. This means that UNHCR works to identify and address risks of statelessness, which may arise as a result of a gap in nationality laws and a conflict in laws between states; administrative obstacles, such as onerous requirements for proof of nationality; the situation of state succession; and discrimination on race, gender, disability, and other grounds.

It is in relation to this intersection, between prevention of statelessness and citizenship, and the office's responsibilities in respect to the 1961 convention, that UNHCR welcomes the opportunity to present to you one specific comment on Bill C-425.

Please allow me to clarify again from the outset that UNHCR can only comment on elements of the bill that relate to statelessness. I will therefore avoid referring to questions of withdrawal of Canadian citizenship for individuals who possess dual or multiple nationalities as in principle, statelessness is not an issue in such cases.

With respect to Bill C-425, clause 2 of the bill amending section 9 on the Citizenship Act provides for withdrawal of Canadian citizenship, as follows:

A Canadian citizen who is also a citizen or a legal resident of a country other than Canada is deemed to have made an application for renunciation of their Canadian citizenship if they engage in an act of war against the Canadian Armed Forces.

In this respect, UNHCR would like to submit that the possible withdrawal of citizenship of a Canadian national who is also a legal resident of a country other than Canada is at odds with the provision of articles 7 and 8 of the 1961 convention, requiring contracted states not to permit renunciation, or provide for loss of nationality—article 7—or deprivation of nationality—article 8—where the individual concerned would be rendered stateless.

I wish to state from the outset UNHCR's acknowledgement and appreciation for the minister's comment before this committee, that since Canada is a party to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the bill needs to be amended in order to ensure Canada follows its international obligation. The minister stated that, as written, the bill would apply to citizens who are legal residents of another country and should they not have dual citizenship, it would render them stateless. The minister urged the committee to consider amendments so that only those with dual citizenship would have their citizenship renounced to ensure that no one is made stateless.

• (1010)

UNHCR fully concurs with this position and highlights that this is the only section of the bill that, if not amended, would be inconsistent with Canada's obligation under the 1961 convention. Therefore, UNHCR respectfully recommends the words "or a legal resident" be deleted from the text.

I would like to add a few words on renunciation laws and the provision of nationality in accordance with the 1961 convention. The 1961 convention prohibits renunciation laws and deprivation of nationality when this results in statelessness. There are exceptions to this general rule, as foreseen in article 7 with regard to loss of nationality and article 8 with regard to deprivation of nationality. These exceptions are not applicable to Bill C-425. The exceptions are narrowly defined.

With respect to loss of nationality, the only exceptions to the general rule are in relation to prolonged residence abroad by naturalized citizens and failure to register for individuals born outside the territory. With respect to deprivation, the exceptions to the general rule relate essentially to nationality acquired by misrepresentation or fraud and conduct that is inconsistent with the duty of loyalty toward the state. However, this latter set of exceptions to the general rule prohibiting deprivation of nationality resulting in statelessness may be applied only by those states that made a declaration at the time of signature, the ratification of accession that they retained the right to apply. Canada did not make such a declaration upon accession to the 1961 convention in 1978.

The convention also requires that these grounds needed to exist in national law at the time the declaration was made. Canada, together with the U.K., put forward the drafting for these elements of article 8 of the convention when the text of the 1961 convention was negotiated.

International human rights law foresees differences in treatment depending on the specific circumstances of different groups of people. This approach can be summed up with the axiom that people in the same situation must be treated the same, people in different situations may be treated differently, however there must be a legitimate reason for a difference in treatment. In support of this principle, the United Nations Human Rights Committee states, "The enjoyment of rights and freedoms on an equal footing, however, does not mean identical treatment in every instance". This is paragraph 8 of "General Comment 18", the Human Rights Committee, 1989.

It is necessary that the Citizenship Act differentiates between the impact of specific elements of the Citizenship Act on people who have another nationality and on those who do not. The former are

left without the protection of another state, while the latter are stateless. The difference in treatment therefore serves a legitimate purpose, which is the prevention of statelessness.

Chairman Tilson, honourable committee members, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

**The Chair:** Your Excellency, thank you very much for your remarks. I think you were here for Bill C-31, and we thank you for that, too.

As you know, members of the committee will now have some questions for you, and perhaps for Ms. Williamson as well.

Mr. Menegakis is first.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, Your Excellency, for your presentation and for appearing before us this morning.

We know that a Canadian citizen can have his or her citizenship taken away if it was obtained fraudulently. Almost all our peer countries have the ability to strip citizenship for reasons such as treason and terrorism, among other things, yet critics of this bill claim that Canadian citizenship is an inalienable right. How do you respond to that?

• (1015)

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** As I expressed, there is a general rule that is the basis of the 1961 convention. I remind you that in the 1961 convention on the reduction of statelessness, the general rule is that no action of the state should render a person stateless—no action in terms of accepting renunciation when we allow persons to renounce citizenship or revocation of citizenship. There are two different articles in the 1961 convention. Article 7 deals with renunciation by the individual, and article 8 deals with revocation of citizenship, which means it's an act of the authority.

In both situations this cannot happen if that action renders the person stateless. There are exceptions, as I said. There are exceptions to this general principle on both articles, on article 7 with respect to renunciation and on article 8 with respect to revocation. Certain exceptions are linked to the concept of loyalty to the state.

But as I said, unfortunately in this context, there was a declaration that had to be made at the time of accession to the 1961 convention on the basis of article 8.3 of the same convention, which at that moment of accession in 1978 Canada did not make.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** But this bill specifically addresses people with dual citizenship, so in effect no one is going to be deemed stateless. They will have another country; they would have another nationality. We're talking about people with dual citizenship in the context of this bill.

Do you believe that citizenship should never be taken away regardless of how violent or disloyal one's actions are? Is that part of the UNHCR policy?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Sir, with respect to the first part of your question, I am referring, as I said, to the part of clause 2 that refers to a Canadian citizen who is also a citizen “or a legal resident” of a country other than Canada. So our only recommendation concerns these words “or a legal resident”. That means that, if someone is a Canadian citizen and a legal resident of another country, it's not a case dual nationality.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** The context of the bill means that if they are a permanent resident of this country, not of another country....

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** No.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** I think that's the context of the bill, and perhaps that can be clarified.

Let me go on with my questioning. Both the minister and the sponsor of this bill, MP Devinder Shory, acknowledge there is no internationally acceptable definition for the term “acts of war”. However, when officials from the Department of National Defence appeared before this committee, they stated that “armed conflict” may be a more appropriate term.

What is the UNHCR definition of armed conflict?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** In UNHCR there is no definition of armed conflict. UNHCR is the organization that deals with the humanitarian consequence of refugee situations. In this particular case, there's also a specific mandate for the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

There are other instruments, there are other conventions, there are other solutions in international law that deal with the issues of war, and there are definitions of war crimes in the statutes of the International Criminal Court, but these are areas that do not pertain to the mandate of UNHCR. In this particular respect, it's the mandate on the prevention and reduction of statelessness. In that regard, there is a specific element in the bill dealing with the possibility or the risk of creating statelessness, and this is what I'm trying to address here today with you.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** So would you have any suggestion—though I'm not sure you would—on how our committee could draft an amendment that would more clearly define what that meant?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** As I put it in my recommendation, making this bill consistent with the provision of the 1961 convention by deleting the words “or a legal resident” would be enough because that is the part that impacts on the risks of creating statelessness.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** We've heard from witnesses that the term “acts of war” is not clearly defined in domestic or international law. When Minister Jason Kenney appeared before our committee, he recommended that the committee amend the bill to include acts that are more commonly defined in law. He suggested that terrorism, high treason, and those who serve as members of a country's armed forces engaged in an armed conflict with Canada be added as grounds for deemed renunciation of one's citizenship.

Would you agree with that?

• (1020)

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** I don't think UNHCR really has a say with respect to what to add or even the definition of crimes. Our concern is that, whatever the reasons for revoking a citizenship, it should be

done in compliance with the obligations under the 1961 Convention, which requires that those acts would not render a person stateless.

**Mr. Costas Menegakis:** When the minister appeared before us, he was pretty clear that it is not our intention to in any way contravene Canada's commitment to the 1961 Convention. Nor is it our intention to render people stateless. That people who do not have another state to go to will simply be tried and spend their time in a Canadian prison is not the intention of this bill. The intention of this bill is to clearly add another dimension to those people who are dual citizens.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Thank you again for appearing before this committee.

There are others who are very concerned that this bill, in its current form, could apply to a person who is a legal resident but not a citizen of a country, thus creating a situation of possible statelessness. I don't believe we have a clear understanding of the definition of a legal resident. Can you share some of your thoughts on the ramifications of applying this bill to someone who is a legal resident of another country, but not a citizen?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** That's why we say citizenship is very important in having rights. It is a very important bond that links the individual with the state. Someone who is a citizen has the protection of the state. If you are a legal resident, you are not a citizen. That means that a Canadian citizen who is also a legal resident of another country cannot invoke the protection of the state from that other country. Had that person lost citizenship because of the acts included in this bill, he would remain a stateless person, a legal resident of another country. Legal residency cannot be equated with citizenship. Citizenship is the strongest bond of rights and duties that link individuals to the state.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Thank you for some of that clarification.

The amendment you suggested, if that amendment is not accepted and the bill is not changed, will the same ramifications exist?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Yes, that's correct.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Okay, thank you.

There are concerns for individuals, child soldiers, for example, who may have dual citizenship in Canada. They could be caught under this bill, even if they had been compelled to participate in an act of war, as defined by the bill, or an armed conflict, as others have mentioned is a better term to use.

When the minister visited us last week, he said the minister would retain discretion not to pursue an application for deemed renunciation “for an individual where they have been compelled to do something against their own volition”. Is relying on ministerial discretion enough to protect children with dual citizenship who may be caught up in this bill?



**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** We see in many other institutions that children's rights are particularly important, and that they have to be protected in a special way. We know in the determination of refugee status how important the special procedures are that have to be applied when interviewing children. Even in the difficult context of exclusion with respect to refugee status procedures, in duress involving child soldiers, for example, children have to be seen in a particular light. There are specific and expert procedures that have to be applied. When we deal with children's rights, special procedures have to be applied, because different situations may be at stake. Duress and coercion are a reality whenever we deal with children's rights.

• (1025)

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** So if I may extrapolate a little bit from your comments, ministerial discretion alone is not enough, and we need to have experts involved. Is that what you're saying? I don't want to put words in your mouth; I'd rather it come out of your own mouth.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Well, we'd like to see how that is worded in the bill, but definitely I would say it's important that when children's rights are at stake, there must be special procedures, and expertise must put into the context of that evaluation.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Do you have some actual recommendations that you could perhaps make to this committee to that effect?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Probably not at this stage, but definitely we can offer services and resources, if need be, upon specific request.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Okay. Fabulous.

If you think of anything, please do send it in writing to the clerk and the chair of the committee.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** All right.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Thank you, because that's what this stage of the committee is about, to actually look at the bill and see how we....

As parliamentarians, we have a fiduciary duty to Canadians and citizens—and non-citizens, I guess, alike—to make sure that we are making the best laws and making the best policy moving forward. Your expertise would be very much welcomed, so thank you.

The minister indicated that, in principle, he's in favour for Bill C-425 to apply to Canadians without dual citizenship, but is legally bound by the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to which Canada is a signatory, of course, as you've mentioned time and time again.

I'm uncertain; while we all have a clear understanding of the issue of statelessness, can you share with us the importance of not being stateless and some of the consequences for people who are stateless?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** As I said before, we consider citizenship as a fundamental right of persons. It has been described as "the right to have rights", because without citizenship, all sorts of other rights cannot be accessed.

We see the situation of statelessness in the world as being still very serious. It's estimated that there are 12 million stateless persons

in the world. This is only an estimation by the UNHCR, but in recent years, UNHCR has done activities together with countries to try to identify and register people. Up to now, together with the support of countries, 3.5 million stateless persons have been registered, although of course the estimation of statelessness is larger.

Living a life of statelessness is living a life at the margins of society. This is particularly true when people try to access such rights as having identity documents, registering for schools, and registering for social rights when situations come up. Stateless persons cannot enjoy basic rights.

This is surely something that countries should look forward to solving at the global level. We believe this is not impossible. We are living in an era when actually nationalities are very important, and national principles are very strong. In a sense, then, the existence of statelessness is a bit at odds with a world that is defined by the existence of states.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

Mr. Lamoureux.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You know, Bill C-425 initially will in fact....

As you have correctly pointed out, Mr. De Angelis, at the end of the day, if it were to pass as is, it would cause potential statelessness. Now, the government, thankfully, because of the UN declaration of 1961, recognizes that this would not be a good thing.

So now the minister comes forward—I have suggested to hijack the bill by Mr. Shory—and says, well, what we'll do is we'll establish two classes of citizenship: those that have dual citizens will in fact be stripped of their Canadian citizenship, and those that don't have dual citizens will have to look at the internal justice system.

I realize that you more so want to talk about the issue of statelessness, and you've pointed out an amendment to Mr. Shory's bill that would deal with that. But do you have any comment on the issue of the establishment of two classes of citizenship?

• (1030)

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** No, I don't have a comment directly in relation to it. My comment was related to the prevention of statelessness, which you addressed correctly.

As I said, in international human rights there are situations wherein the law foresees differences in treatment depending on specific circumstances of different groups of people. As I said, people in the same situation must be treated the same; people in differing situations may be treated differently.

With respect to statelessness, it is important that any citizen should understand that the impact is different when you withdraw citizenship from someone who has dual nationality from when you withdraw citizenship from someone who has only one nationality. The impact is very different. We want to prevent an impact that results in statelessness.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** But you would see them as two totally different issues: Mr. Shory's bill, and then the creation of the renunciation of citizenship for those individuals who have dual citizenship.

I guess I'm asking you to speculate a bit here, but when you deal with the issue of taking away one's citizenship, do you see this as a major issue on which there needs to be good public debate?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Taking away citizenship from someone who has only one, yes, is a big issue, because it results in statelessness. Those situations do not fall under the exceptions that are foreseen in the convention—as I said, articles 7 and 8. They result in statelessness, and that's the issue we want to prevent.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Right.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** There are exceptions, as I said; however, those exceptions are not applicable to this bill.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Right.

With a private member's bill, the entire process passes within four hours of debate, there is a limited number of speakers, and individuals such as you will be invited to a committee. I'm wondering to what degree there's an obligation, given that the minister has brought in something potentially totally new that establishes a second class of citizenship—which a lot of the discussion has been about—to find a better way to address the broader issue by allowing for more thorough debate on the issue before a decision is made.

Would that be advice that you would provide?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** No, I would not comment on this, because it doesn't impact upon my concern here, which is contributing to your work of creating a bill that does not result in statelessness.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** I can appreciate the sensitivity and why you wouldn't comment on it, but you can't blame me for asking the question.

At the end of the day, individuals, back in 1961 when the convention was made....

I'm not sure whether you gave a precise definition of exactly what the statement was. Do you have it at hand?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** The statement of...?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** I mean the statement of the United Nations back in 1961, the reference to statelessness.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Well, I have the convention here in front of me, and as I said, the articles that pertain to this discussion are articles 7 and 8. Probably more important is article 8, which deals with revocation of citizenship by the state, because in article 8 there are certain exceptions specifically motivated by fraud, misrepresentation, and also acts against loyalty to the state.

• (1035)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** Thanks, Chair. How much time...?

**The Chair:** You have seven minutes.

**Mr. John Weston:** Okay. Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for coming, Mr. De Angelis, and for your work to help people who are in dire straits throughout the world.

First I'd like to address what my colleague Mr. Lamoureux has brought up on several occasions, the creating of two classes. He does that to derogate the quality of the bill, but I would point out that in most cases laws will affect people differently. The main aspect or inherent intention of Mr. Shory's bill is not to create different classes of people but to make clear that citizenship is conditional, and the condition in this case is that you not commit acts of war against the people who share the citizenship you've been given.

That leads to my first point. Our minister has recommended that the committee include an amendment ensuring that no one will be left stateless. We've heard this now several times in this hearing. I want to get on the record and make categorically clear that you support such an amendment, given that it will ensure that we don't end up causing the problem you're most concerned about.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Yes, absolutely.

As I said from the outset, we support, acknowledge, and appreciate the minister's comment with respect to making amendments to this bill that would avoid the risk of statelessness. I've also indicated in my recommendation that removing the words "or a legal resident" would do that. Removing the words "or a legal resident" from the text of the bill would avoid the risk of creating statelessness.

**Mr. John Weston:** Mr. De Angelis, in a moment I'm going to refer to the laws of Britain, Switzerland, Australia, and the United States, all of whom have provisions in their laws by which they can strip citizenship.

Before I refer to those provisions, isn't it true that Canada is virtually alone among our peer countries in not having the means to strip citizenship for reasons such as terrorism or treason?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** As I said, in article 8 of the convention there is the possibility for a state to revoke citizenship on the basis of acts that impact on loyalty to the state. That exception is not applicable to the bill, because Canada did not make the declaration at the time of accession to the 1961 convention that it would use those exceptions. Some countries did, Austria and France, and you mentioned the U.K. and New Zealand. They made that declaration and can use the exception in article 8 of the 1961 convention.

But the fact that Canada did not make that declaration in 1978 means it cannot use the exception provided for in article 8 of the 1961 convention.

**Mr. John Weston:** I don't know if we have a disagreement here or not, but let me refer to the provisions. Firstly, Britain allows the country to strip citizenship if it's deemed to be "conducive to the public good". In Switzerland, you can strip citizenship if the person has acted in a way that causes serious prejudice to the national interest of the country. In Australia, the government may strip citizenship if it would be contrary to the public interest if an individual remained a citizen; and in the United States, citizenship can be stripped or revocation can be imposed for high treason or for someone being a member of an armed forces at war with the United States.

I'm not sure whether I or the Minister of Justice would agree with the interpretation you're making of the consequence of that declaration.

Putting that aside for just a minute, do you think that these are the types of inspiration or precedents we should be examining as we look at the wisdom of enacting the bill proposed by Mr. Shory?

• (1040)

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Well, with respect to the technicalities of different countries, of course, it would be very difficult for me to answer on each of them. I can certainly support the work of this committee by sending some materials later on with respect to certain countries, and especially the countries that you have mentioned, the U.K., New Zealand, and Australia. The U.S.A. is not party to the 1961 convention with respect to these issues. We can forward this documentation to you as information.

In general, what I wanted to say was that there should be safeguards and provisions in citizenship acts and in nationality laws that allow revocation of citizenship in accordance with the existing provisions of the conventions to which countries are a party. So every nationality law and every citizenship act should be seen in that respect.

**Mr. John Weston:** All right. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Mr. Opitz.

**The Chair:** You have less than 30 seconds.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Sir, are you aware that Canada, among the G-20, resettles one out of 10 refugees in the world?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Absolutely. We are part of that exercise.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Would you then not agree that we go a great length to try to create a state for many people who might be stateless as refugees?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Refugees are not stateless—the majority are not. Some stateless persons may be refugees, and in that case a stateless person who applies for refugee status and is recognized as a refugee.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Understood.

**The Chair:** Ms. Freeman.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here and speaking about the importance of our not creating stateless people. I think you did very well in explaining the practical consequences of having stateless persons. I think it is very important to point out the fact that we would be doing that by leaving the legal resident status in this bill.

I have a question. If we were to revoke a person's citizenship because they committed an act of war against us, and one of our allies who also has this policy or law to revoke citizenship—let's say the U.K.—does the same, would that then create a stateless person? Or is there some means to stop that situation from occurring? I don't know if I'm being clear. A person who is a dual citizen of—

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Every country applies its own citizenship and nationality laws in isolation, probably. I don't know if there are discussions of some kind. That may be possible. But for UNHCR, as

I said, the basic principle is that acts should not result in statelessness. I don't know how to comment more on this.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** I don't know if I was clear. It's just so hypothetical, obviously, because many parts of this bill are very hypothetical at this stage. If I were Canadian and British, and both of these countries can remove citizenship, and I commit an act of war against our ally, Britain, which often fight alongside, then in that case—

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** True. Who would be the—

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** —there could be a stateless person.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Yes. Who would be the first? I do not have a comment on that. In the case you say, who would be the first, of the two countries—

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** If Britain were to do it before us.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** —to revoke citizenship? I don't think I have an answer to that.

• (1045)

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** It seems such a very strange situation to be putting ourselves in. Could a person be stateless and remain in Canada if they were here?

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Stateless persons do remain in Canada.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Yes.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** There are situations that our office is actually working on together with Citizenship and Immigration Canada. We are working with the government to try to find solutions for persons who are stateless—and they do remain in Canada. They come to Canada through the refugee program. They have not been recognized as refugees, and so they remain in Canada as failed asylum seekers, failed refugees. But then of course they cannot be removed.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Right.

**The Chair:** Your Excellency....

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Of course, there is no place to which they can be removed. So as part of its 1961 mandate obligations, UNHCR is contacting the government to try to find a solution, because these people are without rights in Canada, at the margin of society, who cannot be removed.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** They cannot be removed.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** So this is exactly our work on the prevention of statelessness, which we are doing together with the government.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir. Thank you, Your Excellency.

Ms. Williamson, I'm afraid that our time has expired.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for attending today and giving your comments. We appreciate them very much. Thank you.

**Mr. Furio De Angelis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I will be correct this time. This meeting is adjourned.





Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>