

Chronology Of Events

Sami Durgun

September 1, 1988: Sami Durgun arrives in Canada from Turkey. Before he fled, Sami was asked to participate in military operations against Kurdish villages in eastern Turkey following his compulsory service with the Turkish military. Not wanting to hurt his own people, and knowing that he would be killed if he refused the military's request, Sami heads to Canada with a visitor's visa.

November 16, 1989: Sami submits a refugee claim.

July 1990 – March 1991: There are five attempts to hold Sami's refugee hearing. In the first hearing (July 4, 1990), the translator was a Kurd from Iraq who did not understand Sami's dialect. In the second (January 7, 1991), the translator was Turkish who could not understand Sami completely and who Sami felt uncomfortable with, since he had fled the Turkish authorities. There was no translator at the third session (March 15, 1991). The final hearing lasted three hours with no communication problems.

May 24, 1991: The Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) rejects Sami's refugee claim. The IRB says that refusal to do military service is not a sufficient reason to be accepted, and that Sami could avoid trouble if he moved to another part of Turkey and never spoke his language, which would hide the fact that he is a Kurd.

September 20, 1991: Sami's lawyer sends the Immigration Minister a request for Sami to be landed on Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds. Follow-up letters were sent on March 17 and April 13, 1992. A year later, it was discovered that the Humanitarian and Compassionate application was never entered into Sami's file.

Summer 1992: Sami receives a removal order to be deported back to Turkey. Subsequently, Sami goes into hiding for one year, living without income, health coverage, and unable to finish his schooling or work.

November 1992: The newly-formed Sanctuary Coalition sends a special appeal to then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who agrees to review Sami's case.

September 1993: Members of the Sanctuary Coalition meet with Immigration officials and those who had decided to deport Sami. It is clear from the discussions that Sami's file does not contain information submitted by the Sanctuary Coalition such as photographs and a television clip of Sami participating in peaceful protests in Ottawa against the Turkish government, evidence that would put Sami in grave danger with the Turkish government.

October 27, 1993: Brian Davis, director-general of case management for the immigration department, sends Sami a letter saying that "the Minister's [Doug Lewis] wish is that they [Sami and several others] be landed in Canada once they comply with all statutory requirements." Sami then spends \$725 for a Minister's permit and permits for work and school.

August 19, 1994: Sami's case is referred to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) for security screening.

October 1994: CSIS conducts its first interview with Sami. Sami tells the agents up front that he is not willing to inform on his fellow Kurds.

Fall 1995: Sami enrolls in the Business Logistics Management program at George Brown College. By this point, he had spent several thousand dollars on permits and medical certifications. Sami is supporting himself by working at Hasty Market for \$6 an hour. Despite the fact that he finishes his program, the college is unable to provide Sami with a certificate because he does not have landed status. Many job offers have fallen through because employers are unwilling to risk hiring someone without status.

September 13, 1995: The Sanctuary Coalition makes a request to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to see Sami's file. It is not until February 12, 1998 – two-and-a-half years later – that the file is actually sent to Sami, with key pages of documents withheld. There is much back-and-forth correspondence before most of the information in Sami's file is released.

October 23, 1997: Senior immigration official Anna Lombara sends a memo recommending that Sami be landed because she can find no evidence

from CSIS and other sources that Sami “is or was a member of an organization which is known to have been involved in terrorist acts of violence.”

March 9, 1998: Sami begins a round-the-clock vigil outside the offices of the Liberal Party in Toronto with a sign that reads “10 Years in Limbo.” He maintains his vigil for 40 days and 40 nights.

March 27, 1998: Sanctuary member Mary Jo Leddy of Romero House files a complaint on behalf of Suleyman about the delay in his security clearance to the directors of CSIS and the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC).

April 21-23, 1998: Sami speaks to several Members of Parliament and addresses the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

May 5, 1998: Sami receives a letter from Lomba, who says that he might not be landed because of information that had emerged since Lomba’s October 23, 1997 memo. That “information” turned out to be a discussion of the flag that was flying at the Kurdish Community Centre where Sami had volunteered briefly. He responds soon after.

September 1998 – February 1999: Sami appears before the SIRC hearings to testify about the activities of CSIS, especially with respect to the treatment of refugees.

April 7, 2000: SIRC report released, recommending Sami be given landed status.

May 4, 2000: At Metro Hall in Toronto, Sami awarded “Refugee of the Year” award by the Toronto Refugee Affairs Committee.

Suleyman Goven

December 16, 1990: Suleyman Goven, a mechanical engineer for the Turkish National Railways, flees Turkey by train and heads to Ireland. An Alevi Kurd, Suleyman was jailed and tortured in Turkey, primarily because of his ethnicity and the fact that he was a local leader with a national union.

April 8, 1991: Suleyman arrives in Canada from Ireland.

March 1993: Suleyman receives Convention refugee status.

April 1993: Suleyman applies for permanent resident status.

October 1994: Two agents of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) interview Suleyman as part of his security screening. During the interview, which lasts approximately seven hours, Suleyman is grilled repeatedly whether he is a member of the PKK, whether he is a terrorist, etc. One agent asks Suleyman to provide the names of PKK members who are in Toronto and adds, “Remember that we will base our recommendation for landing on your replies.”¹

Spring 1995: Suleyman is accepted in the engineering programs at McGill University and the University of Toronto. He turns them down because he is not able to afford the foreign student fees, significantly higher than standard tuition fees, applied to foreign nationals and those without landed status in Canada. He is not able to work as an engineer because he needs to have landed status in order to become certified.

August 1995: CSIS submits its advisory report on Suleyman to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Suleyman is not allowed to see what was written.

March 27, 1998: Sanctuary member Mary Jo Leddy of Romero House files a complaint on Suleyman’s behalf about the delay in his security clearance to the directors of CSIS and the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC).

¹ Leddy, Mary J. *At the Border Called Hope: Where Refugees are Neighbours*. Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1997, p. 81)

April 1, 1998: CIC officials conduct a security interview with Suleyman.

April 19, 1998: Suleyman, along with 13 other Kurds from Turkey, sign petition outlining their concerns with CSIS and CIC security interviews. The group notes the inappropriateness of being asked to inform on fellow Kurds in exchange for landed status and the years-long delay in the landing process of their cases, whilst other Kurds are landed within three months.

April 21-23, 1998: Suleyman speaks to several Members of Parliament and addresses the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

September 1998 – February 1999: Suleyman appears before the SIRC hearings to testify about the activities of CSIS, especially with respect to the treatment of refugees.

April 7, 2000: SIRC report released, recommending Suleyman be given landed status.

May 4, 2000: At Metro Hall in Toronto, Suleyman awarded “Refugee of the Year” award by the Toronto Refugee Affairs Committee.