

Somali-born Dutch lawmaker is leaving; Ayaan Hirsi Ali will quit parliament and leave the country after her citizenship was questioned.

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Body

A **Somali-born lawmaker** and fierce critic of radical Islam tearfully announced yesterday that she was **leaving** the Netherlands **after** the government threatened to revoke her **citizenship** because she had lied on her asylum application.

The threat to strip **Ayaan Hirsi Ali** of **Dutch citizenship** unleashed a fierce debate in **parliament** at a time of heightened anti-immigrant sentiment in the **country**.

Hirsi Ali, 36, has been under police guard since a short film she wrote criticizing the treatment of women under Islam provoked the killing of its director, Theo van Gogh, by an Islamic radical.

She said she decided Monday night to resign from **parliament after** Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk told her "she would strip me of my **Dutch citizenship**."

"I am therefore preparing to **leave** Holland," **Hirsi Ali** told reporters.

She declined to say what she would do next or to comment on **Dutch** reports that she would join the American Enterprise Institute in the United States. A spokesman for the institute, Andrew Pappas, said that **Hirsi Ali** was offered a position as a resident fellow but that he could not confirm she had accepted.

The decision to revoke **Hirsi Ali's citizenship** appeared driven by domestic **Dutch** politics. It drew criticism from Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, who said he was "surprised by the speed" with which Verdonk had acted and asked her for an explanation.

He said Verdonk bore "individual responsibility" for decisions in immigration cases.

Hirsi Ali falsified her name and date of birth on an asylum application when she arrived in 1992, fearing reprisals from her family **after** she had fled an arranged marriage.

She was granted a passport in 1997 and acknowledged the falsification in 2002 during vetting as a candidate for **parliament**. There were no objections then.

After a television program revived the matter last week, one of **Hirsi Ali's** political opponents, far-right **lawmaker** Hilbrand Nawijn, brought pressure on Verdonk to revoke her **citizenship**.

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Verdonk reviewed the case and found naturalization had been improperly granted. A ruling by the **Dutch** Supreme Court in 2005 held that passports issued to people with false names were automatically invalid.

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