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POLITICS 101|| WPA co-leader and APNU Member of Parliament, Dr. David Hinds has rejected talks that Opposition Leader, Azruddin Mohamed is a political prisoner, noting that the government's treatment of the businessman is rooted in personal fallout rather than his political activities.

and suggesting that the PPP's real concern is what Mohamed knows about the party's alleged wrongdoing.

Speaking on Tuesday night's edition of Politics 101, Dr. Hinds said Mohamed was not being prosecuted because of his political advocacy or criticisms of the government, but because of his personal dealings and what he might eventually disclose about individuals with whom he was previously associated.

"He's not a political prisoner. He's a victim of ....operating in the government for fallout," Dr. Hinds said.

He maintained that Mohamed does not pose a significant electoral threat to the governing People's Progressive Party (PPP), and that the government's concern about him is more personal than political.

"He's in jail for his personal action. And the state, the government considers his personal action dangerous," Dr. Hinds said.

He said Mohamed's former association with people in the government and his knowledge of their alleged dealings could explain the treatment he is receiving.

"The government fear of Muhammad is that Muhammad was hand in hand with them in the badness and that he knows the PPP badness and at some point, if he realises that there's no turning back for him, he's going to spill some terrible badness of the PPP," Dr. Hinds said.

He added: "The PPP's fear of Muhammad is not political. It is personal."

Dr. Hinds, however, said Mohamed should not be given a free pass simply because he is now openly challenging the government. He said the opposition leader must also be reminded of his own alleged involvement in the very practices he is now exposing.

"His usefulness to the larger struggle is that he can bring into the open what the rest of us suspect. The problem is that in so doing he was part of it," Dr. Hinds said.

He questioned the public's willingness to overlook Mohamed's

"When he stands up in front and says this is what corruption looks like, he should go in front of his own property and say this is what corruption looks like, because he amassed a lot of his wealth in the same way that those people who are standing up in front of the house amassed their wealth," he said.

Dr. Hinds stressed that acknowledging Mohamed's past does not mean accepting the manner in which he is being treated by the state. He said the oppositionileader, like every other citizen, is entitled to his individual rights and liberties, regardless of his wealth or political standing.

"That doesn't mean that they must take advantage. That doesn't mean that I must prosecute him and persecute him. Because as an individual, he has individual rights," he said.

"Whether big millionaire or small millionaire, everybody has rights. Billionaires got rights too."

Mohamed's latest incarceration follows his October 30 remand, alongside 20-year-old Police Constable Ryan Greene, on a charge under the Cybercrime Act relating to the alleged unauthorised disclosure of electronic data from the Guyana Police Force's Safe City surveillance system.

The prosecution alleges that Greene obtained surveillance footage connected to the October 12 shooting outside the residence of Senior Superintendent Prem Narine, head of the Police Force's Special Branch, and supplied it to Mohamed in exchange for $800,000. Mohamed subsequently made portions of the footage public at a press conference.

Both men were denied bail and remanded to prison until November 24. Mohamed's lawyers have challenged the bail decision through a High Court application. That hearing has been
The latest charge is separate from the extradition proceedings involving Mohamed and his father, businessman Nazar Mohamed. The United States is seeking their extradition to face an 11-count indictment involving allegations of gold smuggling, fraud and money laundering, which both men have denied.

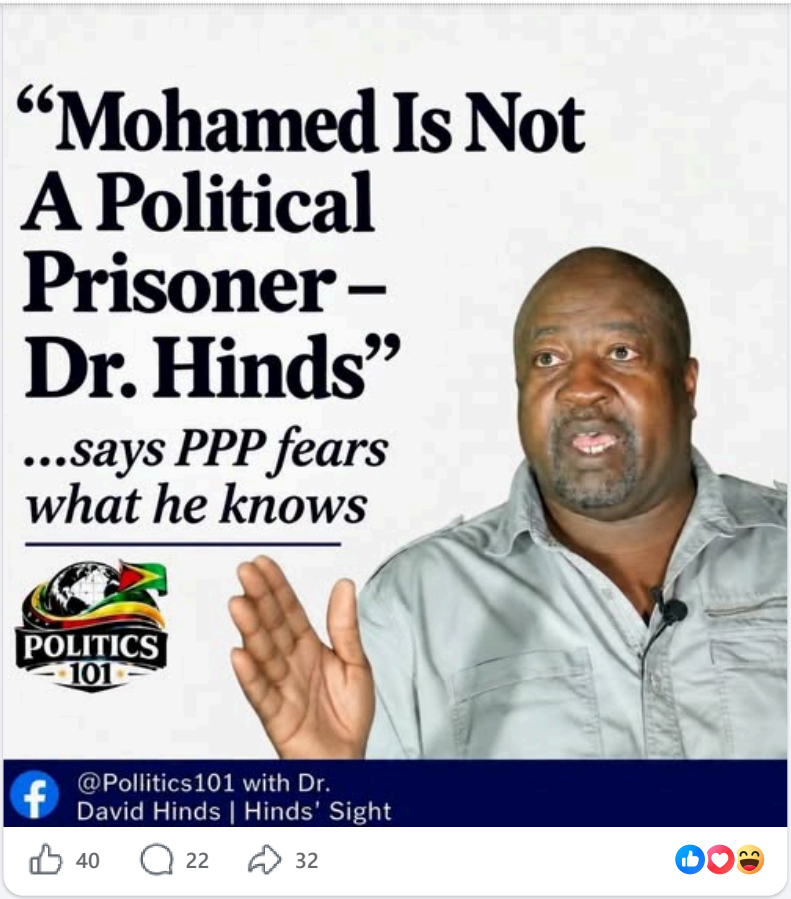
Mohamed also faces separate criminal proceedings arising from the October 12 shooting incident. He and two others have pleaded not guilty to charges including unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition and attempting to obstruct the course of justice.

Dr. Hinds drew a distinction between the opposition leader's circumstances and those of political activists who, he said, face prosecution because of their public opposition to the government.

"When they go after us, it's because of political work. When they shackle us, it's because of a political statement that we made that has political repercussions," he said.

"When they persecute and prosecuteMuohamed, it's not overtly political. It's overtly personal."

He nevertheless condemned the excessive treatment of Mohamed, maintaining that the allegations against him do not remove his entitlement to due process and protection under the law. **See less**


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