

Somali
Journalists
Syndicate



Annual Report 2020

FREE JOURNALIST



STATE OF PRESS FREEDOM IN SOMALIA

Threats & Violence
Against Journalists
on the Rise With
Total Impunity



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*This Annual Report is the second one produced by the **Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS)** since it was founded in 2019. The report documents state of press freedom and violations against journalists in Somalia.*

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ABOUT SJS

Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS) is an independent journalists' trade union established in May 2019 to defend the rights of the journalists, represent its member journalists and promote press freedom in Somalia. SJS provides legal aid to journalists whose journalism work results in court cases and in need of legal defense through professional lawyers.

Our goal is to be the true voice of the endangered Somali journalists and address their growing needs by building their professional capacity through trainings, seminars or workshops, with the aim to strengthen the skills and the capacity of the journalists to produce quality journalism.

SJS is a member of the Congress of African Journalists (CAJ) and the global Alliance of Civil Society organizations (CIVICUS).

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SUMMARY

Over the course of the year 2020, press freedom and journalists working in Somalia continue to face serious threats. Somalia maintains its unenviable title as one of the most dangerous countries to practice journalism globally. Threats and attacks from government officials, private individuals and the militant al-Shabaab insurgency remain the norm.

For the fifth year in a row, Somalia tops the Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) Global Impunity Index¹ for countries where the perpetrators against journalists escape prosecution. Authorities -whether in the federal level or the regional states- repeatedly failed to investigate cases of killings or attacks on journalists, media outlets and critics in 2020.

Journalists seeking to report on security issues, wrongdoings of state officials and human rights abuses have regularly faced harassment and intimidation and many have been compelled to resort to self-censorship. As the country is now in transition and prepares to hold its elections, the problems have increased further.

In addition to the ongoing violence against journalists, authorities in Somalia have imposed a draconian media law that restricts freedom of expression, censors' journalists and administers harsh punishments for any reporting considered critical of the state such as reporting national security or even scrutinizing public officials.

The year 2020 has been another terrible one for the media and Somali journalists. **Two broadcast journalists were killed and four others injured**- with half of the attacks committed by the state security forces. Predominantly police, NISA and agents of security services in the regional states **arbitrarily arrested 56 journalists**. Authorities also **raided and shuttered five media** houses across the country throughout the year. In each case, authorities have failed to open any credible investigation to ensure that perpetrators are brought to book.

State officials in Mogadishu, Puntland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, South West State, Jubbaland and in Somaliland have particularly targeted journalists reporting various topics including but not limited to Covid-19 pandemic, aftermath of al-Shabaab attacks², insecurity incidents, election campaigns-related complaints, corruption and mismanagement of public resources.

Covering demonstrations, mainly those are known to be anti-government, have also sparked police actions against journalists. Almost 90% of the attacks occur while journalists were on duty and while going through security checkpoints.

¹ <https://cpj.org/reports/2020/10/global-impunity-index-journalist-murders/>

² <https://www.dw.com/en/al-shabab/t-18172913>

Despite verbal commitments by president Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo to decriminalize journalism and carry out reform of local laws— such as the outdated Somali Penal Code of 1964, which is widely used to prosecute journalists — attacks and arrests of journalists continued.

The Somali Attorney General has also failed to implement a promised appointment of a national level special prosecutor that can investigate and prosecute killers of the journalists. If fulfilled, this could have reduced attacks against journalists and could have ended the culture of impunity for the journalists' killers.

This report covers 2020 violations against the journalists and the freedom of the press including threats, harassment, arrests, censorship, attacks and killings of journalists in Somalia including Somaliland. The report presented here is based on interviews with local journalists, media directors, family members of affected journalists, civil society representatives and government officials. The Somali Journalists Syndicate, an independent journalists' organization designed to support and speak out for Somali journalists countrywide, has documented and confirmed these cases from 1 January to 31 December 2020.

Abdalle Ahmed Mumin

Secretary General, Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS)

30 January 2021





Freelance journalist, Abdiwali Ali Hassan was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Afgoye town, on 16 February, 2020. | PHOTO/ SJS/ Courtesv.



Kalsan TV journalist, Said Yusuf Ali was stabbed to death in Mogadishu on 4 May, 2020 by a lone knife wielding man. | PHOTO/ SJS/ Courtesv.

MURDERED

On 16 February 2020, unidentified gunmen shot several bullets³ at the head and chest of freelance TV and radio journalist, Abdiwali Ali Hassan, 25 while walking to his home in Hawo Tako neighborhood in Afgoye⁴.

The journalist was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to injuries. The perpetrators were not apprehended and no investigation⁵ was opened.

On 4 May 2020, a knife wielding man attacked and stabbed Kalsan TV journalist, Said Yusuf Ali to death⁶ in Mogadishu.

According to family and colleagues⁷, the journalist was attacked while standing outside a shop in Mogadishu's Hodan district. He died on the spot and the body was taken to the hospital and was kept at the mortuary freezer⁸. No autopsy was carried when the body was buried on the next morning of 5 May. News reports initially said police arrested⁹ the killer but the family says no investigation was launched as of today.

³ <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-somalia-shooting/gunmen-kill-tv-journalist-in-somalia-saypolice-idUKKBN20A00J>

⁴ SJS interview with wife of Abdiwali Ali Hassan in Mogadishu on 16 and 17 February, 2020 and in July, 2020.

⁵ <https://hornobserver.com/articles/507/Hopes-dashed-for-families-of-murdered-Somali-journalists>

⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/05/04/tv-journalist-stabbed-to-death-in-somali-capital/>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/Kalsantv/photos/a.822444731269028/1491652354348259/?type=3&theater>

⁸ SJS interview with Madina Hospital employee and the family of the deceased journalist in Mogadishu, on 4 May 2020, and 5 May 2020.

⁹ <https://www.mustaqbalradio.net/wariye-siciid-yuusuf-cali-oo-caawa-lagu-dilay-magaalada-muqdisho/>

INJURED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

On 4 May 2020, a group of Somali police and officials assaulted¹⁰ and injured Shabelle TV female reporter Safiya Aden Osman and her cameraman Abdulkadir Ga'al while covering¹¹ a protest by a group of internally displaced (IDP) women who complained against mismanagement of food distribution cards in Mogadishu.

The female reporter was blocked and even forced to recant¹² her statement of complaint when she attempted to file a case following the assault. The officers also temporarily confiscated the journalists' equipment including a video camera, according to the TV station.

On 18 May 2020, a cameraman Abdirahman Omar Abdulle of Somali Cable TV sustained¹³ slight injuries on the left arm after armed security forces under the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) raided¹⁴ the premises of Somali Cable TV¹⁵ in Mogadishu and beat him while on duty. The reason of the attack is yet unclear and officers responsible were not arrested and no investigation was carried as of today.



Safiya Aden Osman sustained head injuries after she and her cameraman were physically assaulted by members of Somali police in Waberi District, Mogadishu on 4 May, 2020. |PHOTO/ SJS /Courtesy.

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/sbcsomalitv/videos/534519120571015/>

¹¹ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/04/somali-media-fraternity-condemns-assault-against-female-journalist-and-a-cameraman-in-mogadishu/>

¹² <https://hornobserver.com/articles/350/Somali-police-forced-injured-female-journalist-to-recant-complaint-case>

¹³ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/19/somali-media-fraternity-condemns-recent-violations-against-media-and-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-beledhawo/>

¹⁴ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/19/somali-media-fraternity-condemns-recent-violations-against-media-and-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-beledhawo/>

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/102752216734255/posts/1191380077871458/?d=n>

On 25 June 2020, a uniformed Somali police ¹⁶ officer shot and injured ¹⁷ journalist, Abdifatah Abduqadir Sharif (Iqbal) who works for the local Radio Danan in Hodan District in Mogadishu.

The radio journalist was heading home from work on a motorized three-wheel taxi when the officer shot at him, hitting Sharif in the back of the head, according to the director of Radio Danan¹⁸.

It was not immediately clear why the police officer shot the journalist. Officials at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) said they were trying to identify ¹⁹ the officer who shot the journalist, however, the officer was not arrested and no investigation was launched as end of year.

On 16 August 2020, Mohamed Abdi Hussein Araye, a cameraman with the state-owned SNTV, was critically injured during a car bomb and gun attack at Elite Hotel²⁰ in Mogadishu's Liido beach where he was on assignment that day. The cameraman was hospitalized due to multiple serious wounds he sustained.



Radio Danab reporter, Abdifatah Abduqadir Sharif (Iqbal) was shot and injured on the head by a Somali police officer as he was returning from work to his home in Mogadishu's Hodan District, on 25 June, 2020. | PHOTO/SJS.

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/RadioDanan/status/1276233951540101120>

¹⁷ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/06/26/radio-journalist-shot-and-injured-in-mogadishu-tv-station-seized-in-hargeisa-erigavo-court-remands-journalist/>

¹⁸ SJS interview with the director and founder of Radio Danan in Mogadishu on 26 June, 2020.

¹⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/06/26/radio-journalist-shot-and-injured-in-mogadishu-tv-station-seized-in-hargeisa-erigavo-court-remands-journalist/>

²⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/somalia-dead-gun-bomb-attack-mogadishu-hotel-200816154623368.html>

ARRESTS



Journalists Said Abdullahi Kulmiye (Said Nadara) and Ahmed Mohamed Ali photographed while in detention in Galkayo on Thursday 20 Feb, 2020. | Photo/Courtesy/Private.

On 13 January 2020, Puntland police in Galkayo North briefly detained ²¹ Said Abdullahi Kulmiye (Said Nadaara), editor and founder of Kasmaal Media, an online news platform for reporting insecurity ²² in Galkayo.

He was released on bond on the night of 13 January but was summoned for questioning the following morning by Mudug Police Commissioner, Jama Mohamed Ahmed (known as Sandaqad) who also commands the joint police operation in the region.

On 15 January 2020, Somaliland police in Erigavo arrested ²³ Eryal TV journalist Abdirahman Mohamed Hiddig over a Facebook news article which quoted Mohamed Abdirahman Liban, the deputy

manager of Somaliland's National Printing House, who according to the article, opposed clan elders' efforts attempting to end recent rival clans hostility in El-Afweyn town in Sanaag region²⁴. After 10 days in police custody, the journalist was, however released on bond approved by the Sanaag Regional Court on 4 January 2020.

On 11 February 2020, Somalia's South West State police in Buur Hakaba town briefly arrested²⁵ TV journalist Hussein Ali Gesey, a correspondent for the privately owned independent Five Somali TV and member of SJS, over a Facebook post deemed critical. He was released after spending more than nine hours in detention without charge.

On 20 February 2020, Radio Hiiraan-Weyn reporter, Mumin Muhumed Biyow was at 10 am on Wednesday morning taken into custody²⁶ by Somali National Army (SNA) in the town of Bulo-Burte in Hiiraan region as he was going to interview local traditional elders who opposed the controversial appointment of a new district

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Kasmaalmedia/posts/1684628185000495>

²² <https://www.facebook.com/Saciidnadaara/posts/3256827954334127>

²³ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/01/19/tv-reporter-jailed-in-somaliland-online-journalist-briefly-detained-in-puntland-journalists-restricted-from-coverage-in-south-west/>

²⁴ <https://www.voasomali.com/a/4990938.html>

²⁵ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/02/11/maamulka-koonfur-galbeed-oo-buurhakaba-ku-xiray-weriye-tv-oo-facebook-ku-daabacay-goraal/>

²⁶ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/02/20/sis-condemns-multiple-arrests-against-journalists-in-somalias-hirshabelle-and-puntland/>

commissioner²⁷. The journalist's equipment including mobile phone, camera and voice recorders were confiscated, he was later released without charge on the same day.

On 20 February 2020, Puntland authorities in Galkayo arrested three journalists²⁸: Kasmaal Media editor, Said Abdullahi Kulmiye (known as Said Nadara); SBC TV reporter, Abdiwali Jama Agarane and the director of Radio Voice of Peace (Codka Nabadda) Ahmed Mohamed Ali. The three were covering a protest by the local business community complaining against a hike in taxes that subsequently led to the closure of businesses in Galkayo city²⁹. They were released without charges on the same day³⁰.



Journalist Mohamed Abduwahaab (Abuuja) has been held incommunicado for five months in Mogadishu. | Photo/SJS.

On 29 February 2020, NISA officers arrested³¹ the editor of Radio Hiigsi, Mohamed Abdiwahaab Nuur (Abuuja), on his way to the radio station over a critical editorial article³² questioning the ethical behaviour of Somalia's security forces.

The editorial was broadcasted on Radio Hiigsi and published via its social media platforms. He was released on 2 March without charges. He was re-arrested³³ on 7 March 2020 and held incommunicado for five months. On 3 August 2020, the journalist was taken to a military court and charged with national treason and being a member of the al-Shabaab terror group. On 5 August 2020, the military court dropped all charges due to a lack of evidence and released³⁴ the journalist.

²⁷ <https://cbatv.net/warar/soomaalida/banaanbaxyo-looga-soo-hor-jeedo-magacaabista-duga-cusub-ee-buule-burde/>

²⁸ <https://horseedmedia.net/2020/02/20/somalia-puntland-authorities-arrest-three-journalists/>

²⁹ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/02/20/sjs-condemns-multiple-arrests-against-journalists-in-somalias-hirshabelle-and-puntland/>

³⁰ SJS interview with the journalists after their release on the phone, on 21 February, 2020.

³¹ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/03/01/somali-intelligence-officers-detain-radio-editor-in-mogadishu/>

³² <https://www.facebook.com/RadioHiigsi/posts/135363977977464>

³³ <https://hornobserver.com/articles/235/Somalia-NISA-again-detains-Editor-of-Radio-Hiigsi-in-Mogadishu>

³⁴ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/08/05/radio-hiigsi-editor-mohamed-abuuja-is-freed-after-nearly-five-months-in-arbitrary-detention/>

On 15 March 2020, Puntland police officers in Garowe summoned and arrested³⁵ TV journalist Adan Abdullahi Sheekeeye who works for the central Somalia-based Cabudwaaq TV (CW) following a Facebook post³⁶ that reported the detention of an elder who criticized the state. He was released on bail in the morning of 16 March.

On 19 March 2020, police officers in Mogadishu's Bondhere district briefly detained and harassed Somali Cable TV reporter, Abdullahi Farah Nur³⁷ (aka Yariisow) and his cameraman Abdirahman Omar, while both were collecting vox-pops on the shortage of masks and gloves in the local markets due to the panic of Covid-19 pandemic³⁸.



(From left) Journalists Hamdi Mahad Diriye, Rahmo Hassan, Muno Mohamed and Mohamed Abduqadir briefly detained in Mogadishu on Sunday, 29 March 2020. | Photo/ combined/SJS.

On 29 March 2020, four Goobjoog Media journalists: Hamdi Mahad Diriye (TV reporter and SJS member); Rahmo Hassan Mohamed (TV Reporter); Muno Mohamed Nur (TV Reporter); Mohamed Abduqadir (cameraman); and their driver Abdisalan were detained³⁹ while on assignment covering a story of persons with special needs near the KM4 checkpoint in Mogadishu. The journalists were held at a detention place

³⁵ <https://hornobserver.com/articles/250/SOMALIA-SJS-condemns-threats-harassment-arbitrary-arrest-and-beating-against-three-journalists-in-Puntland>

³⁶ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/03/20/sjs-condemns-threats-harassment-arbitrary-arrest-and-beating-against-three-journalists-in-puntland/>

³⁷ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1345611475622604&id=100005212939220

³⁸ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/04/03/warfdiyeennada-muqdisho-iyo-hargeysa-ee-soo-tebinaya-caabuqa-covid-19-oo-wajahaya-faaf-reeb-iyo-cagajugleyn/>

³⁹ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/03/29/four-journalists-on-assignment-briefly-arrested-in-mogadishu/>

near KM4 security checkpoint before they were transferred to Godka Jila'ow⁴⁰— a notorious underground prison, run by the Somali National Intelligence Agency (NISA) and is used by the government to hold extremist suspects and journalists. The four journalists were released⁴¹ without charge on the same day.

On 20 April 2020, Somali South West (SW) State police officers in Baidoa arrested⁴² Voice of America radio journalist Mukhtar Mohamed Atosh after reporting the death of a 14-years-old girl allegedly gang raped on the road between Mogadishu and Baidoa⁴³. He was released⁴⁴ on 23 April on bail and after forcing the journalist to retract the story⁴⁵.

On 13 April 2020, Police in Jubbaland State of Somalia briefly arrested⁴⁶ Adan Mohamed Salad, a correspondent for the Somali National Television, while filming at Alanley Beach in the coastal town of Kismayo, where a boat carrying khat cargo— the stimulant narcotic leaf recently banned⁴⁷ by the Somalia Federal Government due to the Coronavirus outbreak— was offloaded. He was held for two hours at the police station before he was released⁴⁸ without charge.

On 14 April 2020, Somali police arrested Goobjoog Media Group's journalist Abdiaziz Ahmed Gurbiye⁴⁹ a day after he allegedly wrote a Facebook post claiming that “the Somali president had taken away a ventilator” donated to a local hospital which treats Covid-19 patients. He was transferred to the central prison on Wednesday 15 April 2020. He was released on bail on 18 April 2020 but was re-summoned late June after a charges pressed by the Office of Somali President Office through the Attorney General. From late June to late July, the prosecutors altered the charges⁵⁰ against Gurbiye to include new ones including spreading false propaganda and insulting the honour of government officials. On 29 July 2020, the Banadir Regional Court sentenced⁵¹ journalist Gurbiye to six months jail term and a fine of a five million Somali Shilling (USD 200), which after paying he was freed on the same day of 29 July.

⁴⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/339f7f4f4b5b4e059a55b2772ac5a37f>

⁴¹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/03/29/four-journalists-on-assignment-briefly-arrested-in-mogadishu/>

⁴² <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/21/voa-journalist-detained-after-reporting-death-of-a-rape-victim-in-somalias-south-west-state/>

⁴³ <https://radiokulmiye.net/2020/04/20/wariye-la-tirsan-voa-oo-lagu-xiray-baydhaba/>

⁴⁴ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/23/sjs-welcomes-voa-reporters-freedom-and-the-decision-to-revoke-ban-of-radio-barawes-local-dialect-program/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.voasomali.com/a/5378510.html>

⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10158362536104577>

⁴⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/03/31/khat-traders-farmers-take-a-hit-amid-coronavirus-pandemic/>

⁴⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/14/journalist-covering-covid-19-briefly-detained-in-jubbaland/>

⁴⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/07/07/mogadishu-court-adjourns-case-against-goobjoog-journalist-gurbiye-sjs-and-soma-call-for-the-ag-to-drop-charges/>

⁵⁰ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/07/23/sjs-and-soma-call-for-banadir-regional-court-to-dismiss-the-trumped-up-charges-against-journalist-gurbiye/>

⁵¹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/07/29/a-chilling-message-to-press-freedom-in-somalia-banadir-regional-court-sentences-goobjoog-journalist-gurbiye-to-six-months-in-jail-and-cash-fine/>

On 18 May 2020, police officers in Beledhawo town of Gedo region briefly detained⁵² freelance journalist Warsame Haji Farah after photographing Beledhawo city market on the aftermath of a gun clash within the Somali police force in the border town of Beledhawo that day. The journalist was released⁵³ without charge the next morning.

On 21 May 2020, Somali police briefly detained and physically assaulted⁵⁴ SBC TV journalist, Abdullahi Mohamed Sheikhdon during assignment to cover a Covid-19 awareness campaign⁵⁵ in Mogadishu's Hamar Jajab District. The journalist sought legal redress the following day but police blocked⁵⁶ him instead and took⁵⁷ Sheikhdon to the police commissioner's office forcing him to drop the case.

On 10 June 2020, Somali regional authorities in Gedo detained⁵⁸ freelance journalist Bishar Ibrahim Adan in Burdhubo district. The arrest follows after the Gedo regional administration accused⁵⁹ journalists of not covering the news stories favorable for the regional administration. The journalist was released⁶⁰ later that day without charge.

On 16 June 2020, Somaliland police in Las Anod arrested⁶¹ Somali Cable TV journalist, Khadar Mohamed Tarabi and Khadar Rigah Ahmed, of Universal TV as they were filming a local community members who protested⁶² against the lack of inclusion of the Somali government-Somaliland talks⁶³ in Djibouti. The arrest followed after the police dispersed protesters. Both journalists were released on Wednesday 17 June, 2020 without charges and on a condition that they would not cover local protests.

⁵² <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/19/somali-media-fraternity-condemns-recent-violations-against-media-and-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-beledhawo/>

⁵³ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/19/somali-media-fraternity-condemns-recent-violations-against-media-and-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-beledhawo/>

⁵⁴ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/21/somali-police-officer-assaults-tv-journalist-during-covid-19-assignment-in-mogadishu/>

⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/SBCSomalia/status/1263446760741011456>

⁵⁶ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/22/somali-media-fraternity-concerned-by-intimidation-and-threats-by-the-somali-police-to-deny-journalists-justice/>

⁵⁷ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/05/22/somali-media-fraternity-concerned-by-intimidation-and-threats-by-the-somali-police-to-deny-journalists-justice/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/caasimaada/photos/a.108137877263889/274761833934825>

⁵⁹ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/06/19/journalists-briefly-detained-in-sool-and-sanaag-regions-for-covering-local-protests/>

⁶⁰ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/06/19/journalists-briefly-detained-in-sool-and-sanaag-regions-for-covering-local-protests/>

⁶¹ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/06/19/journalists-briefly-detained-in-sool-and-sanaag-regions-for-covering-local-protests/>

⁶² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QpTrZUv2_w

⁶³ <https://www.voanews.com/africa/somali-somaliland-leaders-resume-talks-djibouti>

On 16 June 2020, Somaliland police in Erigavo arrested⁶⁴ journalist Jabir Said Duale, who covers for the local Horyaal24 TV and was remanded by the Sanag Regional Court on charges related to covering “unlawful” protest in Erigavo. He was freed⁶⁵ on 28 June on presidential pardon.

On 17 July 2020, Abdimanan Yusuf, CEO of Astaan TV, was arrested and has been held in jail⁶⁶ since 17 July 2020 by authorities in Hargeisa and had reportedly been unable to meet his lawyers and family members. Since his arrest, Abdimanan had several court appearances including one on 26 July 2020 in which prosecutors charged him with two articles: espionage and operating an illegal media company in Somaliland. The Court, however, did not find proof of evidence for both charges. Both Marodi-Jeh Regional Court judge Hassan Matan and the deputy Attorney General, Farhan Mire Osman did not respond when asked for clarification of the exact articles of which Abdimanan was convicted. He was released⁶⁷ on 10 December, 2020 under unexplained conditions. However Astaan Cable TV services remain shuttered at the end of year.

On 17 August 2020, officers from the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) arrested⁶⁸ Omar Ahmed Hilowle, the director of the privately owned independent Radio Kaah in Mogadishu following a NISA raid of the radio station. The radio director was held at the Godka Jila’ow detention for more than an hour before he was released without charge in the same day⁶⁹. Journalists at the radio station said the raid follows Radio Kaah’s coverage of a Mogadishu hotel attack that took place the day before.

On 23 August 2020, Somaliland police in Hargeisa arrested Eryal TV journalist⁷⁰ Liban Osman Ali after he interviewed a woman detained⁷¹ and held at the Hargeisa prison without charge for wearing an outfit made of Somali flag⁷². He was freed⁷³ after spending six days in the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Hargeisa without charge.

⁶⁴ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/06/26/radio-journalist-shot-and-injured-in-mogadishu-tv-station-seized-in-hargeisa-erigavo-court-remands-journalist/>

⁶⁵ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/06/29/sjs-condemns-closure-of-radio-gedo-and-somalilands-order-to-delist-universal-tv-and-star-tv/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/somali/war-54034375>

⁶⁷ <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somaliland/somaliland-oo-sii-devsay-mulkiilaha-astan-tv>

⁶⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/08/18/a-cameraman-seriously-injured-during-hotel-attack-nisa-briefly-detains-radio-director-in-mogadishu/>

⁶⁹ SJS interview with Omar Ahmed Hilowle in Mogadishu after his release on 17 August, 2020.

⁷⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFXeJHW9iz0&feature=youtu.be>

⁷¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnAo9utPxfA&feature=youtu.be>

⁷² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnAo9utPxfA&feature=youtu.be>

⁷³ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/09/amid-worsening-press-freedom-situation-puntland-and-somaliland-carry-out-multiple-journalists-arrest/>

On 24 August 2020, Hargeisa police arrested⁷⁴ Abdiqadir Habane, a reporter with a local news website 'Wajaale News' over a story about local businesses he wrote a year and half ago⁷⁵. He was released⁷⁶ after spending three days in the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Hargeisa without charge.

On 25 August 2020, Somaliland police in Erigavo arrested Said Muse Farah, a reporter with the local Badda Cas TV, barely three weeks after he covered the local community's⁷⁷ protest against higher water prices in Erigavo. According to the journalist, he was freed⁷⁸ on a bail on 3 September 2020.

On 6 September 2020, Nugal Regional Court judge, Abdinur Jama ordered the arrest⁷⁹ of two Radio Daljir journalists, Abdiqani Ahmed Mohamed and Khadar Awl⁸⁰ after they visited the court complex in Garowe, the capital of Puntland. The journalists were pursuing a follow-up story⁸¹ about an alleged murder and rape case that took place in Garowe in the prior months. According to the journalists and colleagues, both were released⁸² on 7 September, 2020 on condition that they would be summoned back once the prosecutor prepares their charges.

On 7 September 2020, Somaliand police in Las Anod town detained⁸³, Abdifatah Mohamed Abdi, a journalist with the independent Saab TV, after reporting⁸⁴ destruction of city roads by the recent rains. Las Anod Mayor, Mr. Abdiiaz Hassan Tarwale, reportedly ordered the arrest⁸⁵. According to the journalist, he was freed on Tuesday morning 8 September, 2020 without charge.

⁷⁴ <http://xogreebnews.com/articles/10874/Xukuumada-Somaliland-Oo-Sifo-Sharci-Daro-Ah-Xabsiga-Ugu-Taxaabay-Wariye-Cabdiqaadir-Habane>

⁷⁵ <http://xogreebnews.com/articles/10874/Xukuumada-Somaliland-Oo-Sifo-Sharci-Daro-Ah-Xabsiga-Ugu-Taxaabay-Wariye-Cabdiqaadir-Habane>

⁷⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/09/amid-worsening-press-freedom-situation-puntland-and-somaliland-carry-out-multiple-journalists-arrest/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzP6mTq7CV0&feature=youtu.be>

⁷⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/09/amid-worsening-press-freedom-situation-puntland-and-somaliland-carry-out-multiple-journalists-arrest/>

⁷⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/09/amid-worsening-press-freedom-situation-puntland-and-somaliland-carry-out-multiple-journalists-arrest/>

⁸⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/1146820308666047/posts/3877455758935808/>

⁸¹ <https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/2020/09/03/court-acquits-6-men-accused-of-raping-a-woman-in-puntland/>

⁸² <https://www.daljir.com/agaasime-khadar-cawl-iyo-wariye-cabdiqani-fantastic-oo-laga-sii-dayeey-xabsiga-weyn-ee-garowe/>

⁸³ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/09/amid-worsening-press-freedom-situation-puntland-and-somaliland-carry-out-multiple-journalists-arrest/>

⁸⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE29Qg7g6SY&feature=youtu.be>

⁸⁵ SJS interviews with journalists and police officers in Las Anod and in Hargeisa on the phone on 7 and 8 September, 2020.

On 7 September 2020, Somaliland's Las Anod police arrested Universal TV reporter, Khadar Rigah a week after his coverage⁸⁶ of a protest by the local businesswomen against the demolition of their business kiosks and taxes hike by the city administration. The journalist was released on 12 September without charge after spending five days in Las Anod police cell⁸⁷.

On 14 September 2020, police in Hargeisa detained⁸⁸ journalist Ilyas Abdi Ali, a freelance contributor to the Mogadishu-based Radio Kulmiye and the Nairobi-based humanitarian Radio Ergo. According to colleagues and journalists in Hargeisa, Ilyas was detained⁸⁹ over a Facebook post⁹⁰ calling for the release of Abdimanan Yusuf, the owner of Astaan TV, a local subscription-based cable TV service provider, detained⁹¹ in Hargeisa. On 15 September 2020, a court in Hargeisa granted the police seven days of remand in custody for journalist Ilyas pending investigation, according to family and colleagues. He was released on 21 September 2020 after seven days in jail⁹² without charge.

On 2 October 2020, South West State police detained⁹³ freelance cameraman, Yusuf Mohamed Adan, who reports for Five Somali TV⁹⁴ and Arlaadi News website, while covering clan elders' protest⁹⁵ in Baidoa, according to Mohamed and colleagues. He was held⁹⁶ at the Baidoa police station until Sunday 4 October 2020, when he was freed without charge.

⁸⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nql1_GuGZAI&feature=youtu.be

⁸⁷ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/09/amid-worsening-press-freedom-situation-puntland-and-somaliland-carry-out-multiple-journalists-arrest/>

⁸⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/15/radio-journalist-detained-in-hargeisa-somali-parliament-officials-threaten-media-over-controversial-sexual-bill/>

⁸⁹ <https://radiokulmiye.net/2020/09/15/booliska-soomaaliland-oo-xiray-wakiil-wareedka-knn-ee-hargeysa/>

⁹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/ilyaas.cabdicali/posts/1402828076573451>

⁹¹ https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2020/July/179226/astaaan_tv_ceo_held_in_a_hargeisa_jail_for_over_a_week.aspx

⁹² <https://twitter.com/MohamedSelh/status/1307923716320440320>

⁹³ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/10/06/armed-somali-police-threaten-harass-and-arbitrary-detain-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-baidoa/>

⁹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/716480931703989/posts/3669356316416421/>

⁹⁵ https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=369959280812030&id=100033938827041

⁹⁶ <https://twitter.com/husseingeesev/status/1312468993106567168?s=24>

On 5 October 2020, Radio Kulmiye reporter, Farhan Mohamed Hussein and his cameraman Mowlid Haji Abdi Kheyre were attacked⁹⁷ by a uniformed police officer at Tarabunka junction in Mogadishu's Hodan district. According to video evidence⁹⁸ and interviews with the pair, the radio journalists were on assignment⁹⁹ to gather vox-pops from tuk tuk drivers (3-wheel motorized taxis) regarding the re-opening of roads previously blocked by the security forces. The police officer blocked the journalists from recording videos and threatened to shoot if they do so. They were held at Hodan police station for several hours¹⁰⁰. Both were freed without charge.



Cameraman Yusuf Mohamed Adan (left); Radio Kulmiye reporter, Farhan Mohamed Hussein (centre) and Radio Kulmiye cameraman, Mowlid Haji Abdi Kheyre (right) were attacked and detained by the police in October, 2020 in Mogadishu.



Prominent Radio Kulmiye journalist, Abdullahi Kulmiye Addow has been detained

On 18 October 2020, heavily armed NISA officers raided¹⁰¹ the home of Radio Kulmiye Journalist Abdullahi Kulmiye Addow. The raid follows the journalist's interview with a businessman¹⁰² three days earlier who claimed to support the insurgent group al-Shabaab and criticised the Somali authorities. He was released¹⁰³ on 22 October after he was held incommunicado, on a condition that his radio withdraws the interview with a local businessman who allegedly criticized Somali government and supported the armed group al-Shabaab.

⁹⁷ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/10/06/armed-somali-police-threaten-harass-and-arbitrary-detain-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-baidoa/>

⁹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/AbdalleMumin/videos/1193627871009120/>

⁹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/saleemaan.xaajixmed/videos/4494694083936168/>

¹⁰⁰ SJS interview with the two journalists after their release and their news editor in Mogadishu on 5 October, 2020.

¹⁰¹ <https://sisyndicate.org/2020/10/18/radio-kulmiye-journalist-detained-in-an-undisclosed-location-after-interviewing-a-businessman-in-mogadishu/>

¹⁰² <https://radiokulmiye.net/2020/10/17/nisa-oo-muqdisho-ku-xirtay-xaaji-abuukar-cumar-cadaan/>

¹⁰³ <https://radiokulmiye.net/2020/10/22/deg-deg-weriye-cabdullaahi-kulmiye-oo-goordhow-dib-u-helay-xuriyaddiisa/>

On 2 November 2020, NISA officers in Bardhere town, Gedo region, briefly detained¹⁰⁴ the director of the privately owned Radio Markabley, Ahmed Omar Salihi and its editor, Yahye Abdirisak Sofe. Their detention followed after the radio covered local ¹⁰⁵clan elders who complained against Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo. Both were released on the same day without charge.

On 21 November 2020, Somaliland police in Las Anod town detained¹⁰⁶ Universal TV reporter, Khadar Rigah and held him in detention for a week over a report alleging deteriorating security¹⁰⁷ in Las Anod which he published on Facebook. The journalist was freed on 28 November 2020, after the Sool Regional Court ordered his release.

On 6 December 2020, Jubbaland security forces briefly arrested¹⁰⁸ Eryal TV reporter and SJS member, Abdullahi Hussein Kilas in Kismayo over a news report covering a protest by a group of displaced women who allegedly complained about misappropriation of cash-based assistance to the displaced families in Kismayo. Journalist Kilas was released after he was ordered to remove the story of the protest from his social media accounts and was not charged.

15 December 2020, Plain-clothed NISA officers accompanied by armed police officers detained¹⁰⁹ four journalists: two Radio Kulmiye reporters (Ali Elmi Salad and Zakariye Mohamed Salad) and two Dalsan TV journalists (Abukar Ahmed Hassan Dayah and Abdirizak Ali) who were on their way to cover the protests in Kaaraan District, Mogadishu. The plain-clothed officers first stopped the journalists and started beating them before searching their cameras and questioned them about their assignment, according to three journalists interviewed by SJS. They were held at Abdiaziz Police Station for at least three hours and were freed without charges. Police confiscated journalists' equipment including cameras and phones but later returned them¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁴ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/11/05/sjs-and-soma-call-for-hargeisa-court-to-reverse-its-politically-motivated-and-unjust-verdict-against-astan-tv-ceo/>

¹⁰⁵ <https://radiomarkabley.com/2020/10/31/mid-ka-mid-ah-beesha-sade-oo-ku-shirtey-baardheere-oo-ee-deyn-iyo-dhaliil-u-jeedisey-madaxweyne-farmaajo/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/12/ag-declares-court-action-against-critical-media-as-restrictions-journalists-on-the-rise-ahead-of-somalia-elections/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/khadar.rigaax.9/posts/706610760263923>

¹⁰⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/12/ag-declares-court-action-against-critical-media-as-restrictions-journalists-on-the-rise-ahead-of-somalia-elections/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/17/journalists-covering-protests-detained-beaten-as-information-minister-threatens-with-legal-consequences-for-breaching-media-law/>

¹¹⁰ SJS interview with three of the affected journalists and news editors from their media outlets in Mogadishu on 15 December, 2020.

On 15 December 2020, armed police officers stopped and briefly detained¹¹¹ two Universal journalists: reporter Mohamed Ibrahim Bulbul (member of SJS) and cameraman Abas Abdi Hashi at San'a junction in Yaqshid¹¹². After questioning, they were allowed to go to their station.

On 15 Dec 2020, Waberi police briefly detained Shabelle TV video-journalist, Mahad Hassan Abdi at Waberi Police Station for filming Maka al-Mukarama Road for a TV report assessing the impact of a road closure that day¹¹³. His camera was confiscated and footage deleted. He was released the afternoon without charge¹¹⁴.

On 20 December 2020, armed police officers in Baidoa raided¹¹⁵ the home of RTN TV reporter Mohamed Abdirahin and detained him over an online article¹¹⁶ that has critically analyzed¹¹⁷ the second anniversary of the Somali South West State President Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed (Laftagareen)'s administration. According to the journalist, the police freed him without charge after a six-hour detention and warned him against crafting future articles critical of the president.

On 23 and 24 December 2020, Hirshabelle police arrested¹¹⁸ two prominent journalists: Abdukadir Mohamed Farah (known as Dulyar) and Mohamed Osman Makaran in Beledweyne, in the central Somalia region of Hiiraan a day after he interviewed¹¹⁹ Abukar Warsame Hud who leads an armed opposition militia group¹²⁰ in the outskirts of Beletweyne. The Mogadishu-based Radio Kulmiye aired¹²¹ part of the interview on Wednesday. Both were freed in the afternoon of Thursday 24 December without charge.

¹¹¹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/17/journalists-covering-protests-detained-beaten-as-information-minister-threatens-with-legal-consequences-for-breaching-media-law/>

¹¹² SJS interview with the two journalists in Mogadishu on 15 December, 2020.

¹¹³ SJS interview Mahad Hassan Abdi in Mogadishu on 17 December, 2020.

¹¹⁴ SJS interview with another journalist who is a colleague of Mahad Hassan Abdi in Mogadishu on 17 December, 2020.

¹¹⁵ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/27/press-freedom-rapidly-deteriorating-ahead-of-general-elections-in-somalia-journalists-and-media-directors-arbitrarily-arrested/>

¹¹⁶ <http://dhacdo.net/2020/12/19/lafta-gareen-oo-dagaalkii-shabaab-u-weeciyay-dhanka-siyaasiyiinta-warbixin/>

¹¹⁷ <http://dhacdo.net/2020/12/19/lafta-gareen-oo-dagaalkii-shabaab-u-weeciyay-dhanka-siyaasiyiinta-warbixin/>

¹¹⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/27/press-freedom-rapidly-deteriorating-ahead-of-general-elections-in-somalia-journalists-and-media-directors-arbitrarily-arrested/>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch%3Fv=mbHxNYUleNO>

¹²⁰ https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2020/Dec/180932/fighting_heard_in_beledweyne_after_days_of_protest.aspx

¹²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/KulmiyeOffical/videos/214340193621092>



Detained Goobjoog Media director, Hassan Mohamed Mohamud upon visiting the two colleagues in the police cell. They were all freed late in that day without charges.

On 25 December 2020, Somali police officers and officers from the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) in Mogadishu violently attacked and arrested two Goobjoog Media journalists: reporter Abdikarin Ali Adan and cameraman Abdirizak Abdullahi Fagas while covering an opposition demonstration in Hodan district. According to the journalists and eyewitnesses, a plain-clothed NISA officer shot two times from his pistol towards cameraman Fagas before detaining the two Goobjoog journalists and holding them at Hodan police station³. Local media also reported⁴ the same officer pointing his pistol at protestors and shooting into the air during the demonstrations. In the afternoon, police

On 27 December 2020, Hirshabelle police detained¹²² journalist Mahad Ahmed Alasow, who simultaneously reports for Goobjoog TV

and Radio Jowhar in Jowhar over a Facebook post about protestors injured after police used live bullets during the Sunday 27 December violent opposition¹²³ protests in Beledweyne town. He was released on Thursday 31 December without charge after spending four days in police custody.¹²⁴

¹ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1313735905648684&id=100010368609074

² https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2020/Dec/wararka_maanta25-176119.htm?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=WararkaMaantaFront

³ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/27/press-freedom-rapidly-deteriorating-ahead-of-general-elections-in-somalia-journalists-and-media-directors-arbitrarily-arrested/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/dalsantv/videos/162062839001021>

¹²² <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/31/puntland-police-detain-freelance-journalist-in-undisclosed-location-two-others-released-in-jowhar-and-garowe/>

¹²³ <https://www.voasomali.com/a/5714838.html>

¹²⁴ SJS interview with Mahad Ahmed Alasow on the phone, on 1 January 2021.

On 27 December 2020, Puntland police detained¹²⁵ Horn Cable TV reporter, Farah Mohamed Khalif in Garowe, the capital of Puntland over his coverage¹²⁶ during the 26 December 2020 protests against high inflation rates in Puntland. He was freed on 29 December without charge¹²⁷.

On 27 December 2020, Puntland police detained¹²⁸ free-lance journalist Kilwe Adan who reports for Kilwe Media Inc¹²⁹, a Facebook-based news page in Garowe, the capital of Puntland over his coverage¹³⁰ during the 26 December 2020 protests against high inflation rates in Puntland¹³¹. He remains incarcerated as of end of the year.

CLOSURE, RAID, BAN ON MEDIA OUTLETS, AND CONFISCATION OF EQUIPMENT

On 20 April 2020, South West authorities in Barawe ordered¹³² Radio Barawe¹³³, a community-owned radio in Barawe, Lower Shabelle region to cease¹³⁴ its broadcast of Baravanese dialect, a local vernacular widely spoken in Barawe town without providing any reason. Authorities cited that “it was illegal to broadcast in the Chimini dialect” without providing any evidence for that. However, radio staff, local community rights activists and officials told SJS that the ban of the local dialect was based on ethnic hatred against the indigenous Bravanese community¹³⁵. The radio was allowed to resume the Barawanese dialect on 22 April 2020.

On 18 May 2020, armed NISA officers raided¹³⁶ the premises of Somali Cable TV¹³⁷ in Mogadishu and beat cameraman Abdirahman Omar Abdulle who sustained slight injuries on the left arm. The security officers

¹²⁵ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/31/puntland-police-detain-freelance-journalist-in-undisclosed-location-two-others-released-in-jowhar-and-garowe/>

¹²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/100017734088672/videos/765030847431378>

¹²⁷ SJS interview with Farah Mohamed Khalif on the phone, on 30 December, 2020.

¹²⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/31/puntland-police-detain-freelance-journalist-in-undisclosed-location-two-others-released-in-jowhar-and-garowe/>

¹²⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/Kilwe-Media-Inc-105991660837661>

¹³⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/100017734088672/videos/765030847431378>

¹³¹ <https://www.facebook.com/100017734088672/videos/765030847431378>

¹³² <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/21/sjs-condemns-illegal-ban-against-radio-barawes-programming-in-baravanese-dialect/>

¹³³ <https://www.facebook.com/Radio-Baraawe-883-mhz-107247783994714/>

¹³⁴ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/21/sjs-condemns-illegal-ban-against-radio-barawes-programming-in-baravanese-dialect/>

¹³⁵ SJS interviews with two Barawe radio journalists, one local community rights activist, one elder and two South West State officials in Barawe on 20, 21, 22 April, 2020.

¹³⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/05/19/somali-media-fraternity-condemns-recent-violations-against-media-and-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-beledhawo/>

¹³⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/102752216734255/posts/1191380077871458/?d=n>

threatened to shoot a reporter and a driver at the TV's premises before leaving the area¹³⁸. The reason of the raid is yet unclear and officers responsible were not arrested as end of 2020.

On 25 June 2020, armed Somaliland police officers raided and seized the headquarters of Star TV in Hargeisa¹³⁹ while ordering journalists and other staff members to vacate the premises and shuttered the station subsequently. Somaliland authorities did not provide explanations of the raid and closure of the TV¹⁴⁰ or any court document to justify their actions. However, Star TV journalists and independent sources in Somaliland attributed the authorities' actions to Star TV's coverage of the story about a Djiboutian former lieutenant Air Force Fouad Youssouf Ali¹⁴¹ who was jailed in Djibouti after he released a video alleging corruption by a high-ranking military official and clan-based discrimination, and called for an armed revolt against Djiboutian government¹⁴². On 10 August 2020, Somaliland's Information Ministry fined Star TV with USD5000 for violating the terms of its license¹⁴³. On 12 August 2020 the TV resumed operations after paying the USD5000¹⁴⁴.

On 27 June 2020, Armed Somaliland police officers stormed the offices of Universal TV in Hargeisa and suspended¹⁴⁵ its live news program on air. The police confiscated mobile phones from the journalists and staff on duty before instructing them to leave the premises. Somaliland's Minister of Information, Saleban Yusuf Ali (Kore) has confirmed that the order of closure was issued by himself and accused¹⁴⁶ Universal TV for refusing to broadcast the national address by Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi on the 60th anniversary of independence.

On 28 June 2020, armed NISA officers took over¹⁴⁷ the independent privately owned Radio Gedo premises in the town of Dolow in Gedo region and shut down¹⁴⁸ the radio. According to the chief editor of Radio Gedo, Mohamud Abdirashid, the officers instructed the radio management to surrender the station's keys. The radio station's management said they were not informed of the reasons behind the closure. The radio, however, resumed operations after nearly one month of suspension¹⁴⁹.

¹³⁸ SJS interview with two Somali Cable TV staff, a security officer, one eyewitness and an official at the Federal Ministry of Information in Mogadishu on 18 and 19 May, 2020.

¹³⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDaQkGnDo2I>

¹⁴⁰ <https://sjsynidate.org/2020/06/26/radio-journalist-shot-and-injured-in-mogadishu-tv-station-seized-in-hargeisa-erigavo-court-remands-journalist/>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/02/djibouti-protect-jailed-air-force-pilots-rights#>

¹⁴² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-djibouti-protests-idUSKBN23F2JB>

¹⁴³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MnDe-j7x-s

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAoiadaaAUg>

¹⁴⁵ <https://sjsynidate.org/2020/06/27/sjs-condemns-raid-and-closure-of-universal-tvs-hargeisa-hq-by-somaliland-police/>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge1MpueTUCA>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/radiogedo/posts/617492892194635>

¹⁴⁸ <https://sjsynidate.org/2020/06/29/sjs-condemns-closure-of-radio-gedo-and-somalilands-order-to-delist-universal-tv-and-star-tv/>

¹⁴⁹ SJS interviews with Radio Gedo director and editor on the phone on 30 July, 2020.

On 29 June 2020, Somaliland's Minister of Information, Saleban Yusuf Ali (Kore) sent¹⁵⁰ a note ordering the local television cable providers¹⁵¹ to delist both Universal TV and Star TV from their receivers. In his letter, the minister stated that his ministry had revoked the licenses from Universal TV and Star TV and instructed local business companies to cease advertisement contracts with he both outlets. Star TV was allowed to resume operations on 12 August 2020 after paying USD5000 fine imposed by the Somaliland's Ministry of Information, while Universal TV¹⁵² remained shuttered at the end of the year.

On 10 August 2020, Somaliland's Ministry of Information issued¹⁵³ a decree imposing USD15000 on Universal TV¹⁵⁴ following another order of closure in late June 2020. Somaliland Ministry of Information accused Universal TV to have refused to broadcast President Muse Bihi Abdi's speech during the 26th June Independence Day¹⁵⁵.

On 17 August 2020, NISA officers raided¹⁵⁶ and ordered the closure of the privately owned independent Radio Kaah in Mogadishu. The security officers also detained¹⁵⁷ the radio director. The raid and closure followed the station's coverage of a Mogadishu hotel attack¹⁵⁸ that took place the day before. The radio, which was ordered off-air for more than 12 hours, was allowed to resume operations the next morning of 18 August 2020.

DENIAL OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PHYSICAL ASSAULTS AND OTHER THREATS

On 10 January 2020, journalists from media houses were denied¹⁵⁹ access to cover the local Galmudug State election. Journalists spoke out against this censorship during a news conference¹⁶⁰ on 12 January in Dhusamareb town. Journalists reported that a media officer from the Office of Somali Prime Minister was

¹⁵⁰ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/06/29/sjs-condemns-closure-of-radio-gedo-and-somalilands-order-to-delist-universal-tv-and-star-tv/>

¹⁵¹ <https://warfaafintajsl.com/Solna/2020/06/29/wasiirka-warfaafinta-jsl-saleebaan-yuusuf-cali-koore-oo-wareegto-uu-soo-saaray-ku-codsadiiwey-astaaan-tv-true-cable-tv-hornsat-dhammaan-ganacsatada-kana-codsaday-inay-ka-saaraan-recievera/>

¹⁵² <https://www.bbc.com/somali/53207053>

¹⁵³ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/08/18/a-cameraman-seriously-injured-during-hotel-attack-nisa-briefly-detains-radio-director-in-mogadishu/>

¹⁵⁴ <https://warfaafintajsl.com/Solna/2020/08/10/xukuumadda-jamhuuriyadda-somaliland-oo-ganaax-adag-dul-dhigtay-telefishannadii-xayirnaa/>

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/somali/53207053>

¹⁵⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/08/18/a-cameraman-seriously-injured-during-hotel-attack-nisa-briefly-detains-radio-director-in-mogadishu/>

¹⁵⁷ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/08/18/a-cameraman-seriously-injured-during-hotel-attack-nisa-briefly-detains-radio-director-in-mogadishu/>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/17/somalia-over-a-dozen-killed-in-hours-long-mogadishu-hotel-siege/>

¹⁵⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/01/13/journalists-covering-galmudug-election-protest-against-restrictions-tv-editor-released/>

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/DalkanewsTv/videos/2519086655078604/>

tasked to record footage from the hall where the list¹⁶¹ of the new regional assembly members was presented. Later the premier's office sent pre-edited clips to the newsrooms.

On 10 March 2020, three soldiers from Puntland Presidential Guards denied¹⁶² access to RTN TV journalist Abdiqani Ahmed Mohamed as he was covering the inaugural event of a new hotel in the administrative capital of Puntland, Garowe with the attendance of Puntland President, Said Abdullahi Deni. The officers informed the journalist that they knew him because "he was critical to the state".

On 12 March 2020, a Somali Ministry of Health official had asked¹⁶³ Universal TV to remove an online article that followed an interview¹⁶⁴ with the Minister of Health, Dr Fawsiya Abikar about putting four individuals in quarantine for suspected Coronavirus cases. Both the article and the interview remained online after the editors declined the official's demand¹⁶⁵.

On 14 March 2020, Puntland Presidential guards blocked, beaten¹⁶⁶ and threatened to shoot journalist Shareco Yasin Shareco, a reporter for the privately owned Horn Cable TV and a community-based Puntland State University Radio (PSU Radio) as he was photographing the Conference hall where Puntland's Consultative Conference was taking place. According to Shareco, he dropped the assignment that day and left the hall fearing for his safety.

On 27 March 2020, the Mogadishu-based Anadolu News Agency reporter, Mohamed Dhaysane came under pressure¹⁶⁷ after reporting the Somali Government's announcement to send over 20 doctors¹⁶⁸ to help fight coronavirus in Italy, the country where, at the time, the virus has claimed the most lives. According to the journalist, two state officials asked him to retract the news report after the government met a backlash from the public including families who expressed concern over the health safety of the Somali doctors.

On 30 March 2020, during a meeting with local journalists in Hargeisa, Somaliland's Vice President, Abdirahman Abdullahi Seylici described¹⁶⁹ any journalist who reports a Coronavirus case before government

¹⁶¹ <https://www.voasomali.com/a/5239987.html>

¹⁶² <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/03/20/sjs-oo-cambaareysay-hanjabaadaha-xarigga-sharci-darrada-iyo-garaacis-loo-geystay-saddex-suxufi-oo-ka-howlgala-puntland/>

¹⁶³ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/03/journalists-face-threats-of-intimidation-and-censorship-for-reporting-covid-19-in-mogadishu-and-hargeisa/>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/universalsomality/videos/615094882678947/>

¹⁶⁵ SJS interview with Universal TV editor, Abdullahi Ahmed Nur in Mogadishu on 13 March, 2020.

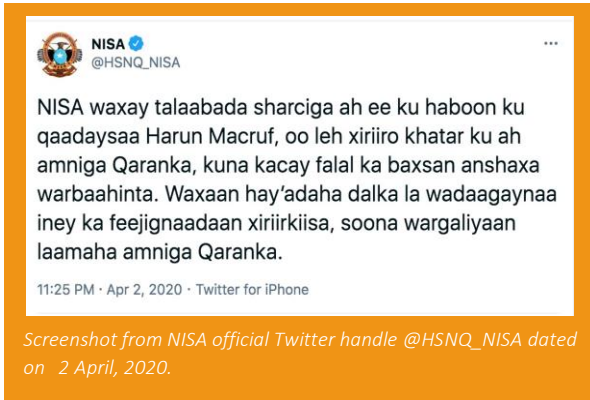
¹⁶⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/03/20/sjs-oo-cambaareysay-hanjabaadaha-xarigga-sharci-darrada-iyo-garaacis-loo-geystay-saddex-suxufi-oo-ka-howlgala-puntland/>

¹⁶⁷ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/03/journalists-face-threats-of-intimidation-and-censorship-for-reporting-covid-19-in-mogadishu-and-hargeisa/>

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somalia-sending-20-doctors-to-help-italy-fight-virus/1782154>

¹⁶⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/03/journalists-face-threats-of-intimidation-and-censorship-for-reporting-covid-19-in-mogadishu-and-hargeisa/>

confirmation as “a national criminal” –in a bid to censor independent coverage following reports of the first case of the pandemic¹⁷⁰ in Somaliland.



On 2 April 2020, Somalia’s National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) announced on its Twitter handle¹⁷¹ that it was investigating Voice of America prominent journalist, Harun Maruf, as having “links that are a threat to national security¹⁷²” and accused him of engaging in actions “outside of the media code of conduct.” On April 23, the agency announced on Twitter¹⁷³ that it had completed the investigation and was handing over the file to the country’s attorney general.

On 9 April 2020, Somali Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports imposed a ban on Goobjoog Media Group, barring access¹⁷⁴ to football stadiums and covering sports events. The Minister did not cite reasons for the ban. In a press conference¹⁷⁵ on 9 April 2020, the Somali Football Federation (SFF) President Abdiqani Said Arab said they upheld the ban due to the minister’s orders.

On 19 April 2020, three Shabelle Media journalists were stopped and beaten¹⁷⁶ by Somali police officers enforcing Covid-19 curfew in Mogadishu. According to Shabelle Media¹⁷⁷, the three reporters: Abdinasir Abdirahman Mohamud, Abdikariin Isse Adawe and Fadumo Abduqadir Hassan were returning from an assignment in the evening when the police attacked them in Hodan district.

On 18 May 2020, a police commander and three officers from Hodan District Police Station stopped¹⁷⁸ Som News TV reporter¹⁷⁹, Mohamed Abdi Osman and cameraman Abdifatah Mohamed Abdullahi who were on assignment to cover the impact of Covid-19 on local businesses. The officers told the journalists to stop filming nearby shops in the pretext that business owners were not happy with the filming. When the

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/somaliland-reports-first-covid-19-cases>

¹⁷¹ https://twitter.com/HSNQ_NISA/status/1245809654216699912

¹⁷² <https://somalupdate.net/articles/16/NISA-manhunts-critical-journalists-in-Somalia>

¹⁷³ https://twitter.com/HSNQ_NISA/status/1253366311687684096

¹⁷⁴ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/12/sjs-condemns-order-by-somalia-minister-of-sports-to-bar-goobjoog-media-from-sports-facilities/>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/zakariahussien.mahamud/videos/223576188859797/>

¹⁷⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/04/21/voa-journalist-detained-after-reporting-death-of-a-rape-victim-in-somalias-south-west-state/>

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.radioshabelle.com/ciidanka-haramcad-oo-jirdilay-wariyeyaal-ka-tirsan-shabelle/>

¹⁷⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/05/19/somali-media-fraternity-condemns-recent-violations-against-media-and-journalists-in-mogadishu-and-beledhawo/>

¹⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/JFaradhere/status/1262702145960361985>

journalists demanded an explanation, the officers threatened to shoot should the journalists continue filming. The TV crew left the vicinity and dropped the assignment.

On 5 June 2020, officials at Somali Federal Parliament issued a decision¹⁸⁰ to bar independent media from covering the Joint Session of the Federal Parliament scheduled¹⁸¹ for 6 June under the pretext of Covid-19 concerns. But state-owned media was allowed to cover the session. The session, which President Mohamed Farmajo's delivered his nation address, also contained a debate on the country's plans for the 2020/2021 elections. The decision was later reversed after local press freedom groups condemned it.

On 4 July 2020, police officer slapped and stopped¹⁸² journalist Fu'ad Mohamud Mohamed of the local independent Radio Risaala forcing him to stop filming the scene of a car bombing¹⁸³ in Hamar Jajab District in Mogadishu.

On 5 July 2020, armed police attacked¹⁸⁴ and blocked journalists from Universal TV, Radio Kulmiye, Radio Risaala and Dalsan TV, as they were covering an opposition protest at Daljirka area in Mogadishu. The police confiscated¹⁸⁵ equipment from Universal TV journalists and even threatened with shooting. The equipment was later returned, according to Universal TV's editor.

On 20 July 2020, Armed Somali police officers from Hamarweyne police station harassed Somali Cable TV reporter Mohamed Osman Dahiye with a gun and blocked him while covering the aftermath of collapsed residential building in Hamarweyne neighborhood¹⁸⁶. The TV camera captured the incident¹⁸⁷. A police officer later intervened and allowed the journalist to carry out his duty and there were no any actions taken against the officer who harassed the journalist¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁰ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/06/05/independent-media-and-journalists-should-be-allowed-to-cover-somali-parliaments-joint-session/>

¹⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/AqalkaSare/status/1265156598160392193>

¹⁸² <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/07/05/amid-increased-violence-on-independent-press-sjs-and-soma-call-for-press-freedom-protection/>

¹⁸³ <https://www.facebook.com/RadioRisaala/videos/282833406250712/>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/universalsomality/posts/3234382383287097>

¹⁸⁵ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/07/05/amid-increased-violence-on-independent-press-sjs-and-soma-call-for-press-freedom-protection/>

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.radiodalsan.com/faah-faahin-gurigii-caawa-kusoo-dumay-xamarweyne-iyo-baadi-goob-socda-sawirro/>

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/AbdalleMumin/videos/164822218661310>

¹⁸⁸ SJS interviews with journalist Mohamed Osman Dahiye and Hamarweyne police commissioner on the phone on 21 July, 2020.

On 8 September 2020, Somali federal police at Mogadishu's Aden Abdulle International Airport blocked¹⁸⁹ two journalists from Somali Cable TV, who were on assignment to cover an opposition politician returning to the country. According to the journalists, when they had asked for clarification, the police cited instructions from the Ministry of Information. However the officials at the Ministry of Information denied that they had given such instructions¹⁹⁰.

On 14 September 2020, officials at Somalia's Federal Parliament threatened¹⁹¹ to block several TV stations after their coverage of a heated parliamentary debate via the Lower House where lawmakers debated the controversial Sexual Offences Bill¹⁹². The decision was not enforced after press freedom groups protested¹⁹³ against it.

On 26 September 2020, Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo, during a public address¹⁹⁴ at the headquarters at Villa Somalia, claimed that journalists and the media were acting unprofessionally and, without evidence, linked some journalists to the militant group Al-Shabaab¹⁹⁵. The president's comments were not only a direct threat against journalists and media houses known to be critical to his administration but such comments placed Somali journalists, who were already operating in a volatile context, at risk of reprisals and undermines the safety of the working and the media freedom.

On 27 November 2020, Jubbaland security officials in Kismayo obstructed¹⁹⁶ a group of local journalists who were trying to access the Kismayo Airport to cover the speech of Jubbaland State president, Ahmed Mohamed Islan (Madobe) upon his arrival from abroad¹⁹⁷. The journalists, who spoke to SJS, said they had left the airport without covering Madobe's speech but were later instructed to broadcast an edited video clip of the leader's speech¹⁹⁸.

On 27 November 2020, Somali police officers in Mogadishu denied access to a dozen journalists from the local media and those covering for international news agencies after a deadly blast hit¹⁹⁹ an ice cream parlor

¹⁸⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/15/radio-journalist-detained-in-hargeisa-somali-parliament-officials-threaten-media-over-controversial-sexual-bill/>

¹⁹⁰ SJS interview with two officials at the Somali Federal Ministry of Information in Mogadishu on 8 September, 2020.

¹⁹¹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/15/radio-journalist-detained-in-hargeisa-somali-parliament-officials-threaten-media-over-controversial-sexual-bill/>

¹⁹² <https://www.facebook.com/SOMALICABLE/videos/3172426306203700/>

¹⁹³ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/15/radio-journalist-detained-in-hargeisa-somali-parliament-officials-threaten-media-over-controversial-sexual-bill/>

¹⁹⁴ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/09/28/on-iduai-sjs-and-soma-bemoan-somali-presidents-unwarranted-verbal-attack-on-journalists/>

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/sntvnews/videos/695147428025087/>

¹⁹⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/12/ag-declares-court-action-against-critical-media-as-restrictions-journalists-on-the-rise-ahead-of-somalia-elections/>

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/347322282075346/videos/680150296031957>

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/347322282075346/videos/680150296031957>

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security-idUSKBN2872EP>

on Airport Road in Mogadishu²⁰⁰. The journalists told SJS that armed police officers at the scene denied them access to photograph the site.

On 1 December 2020, Jubbaland security officials blocked and threatened²⁰¹ 11 journalists from the local media who were planning to cover an event²⁰² where Jubbaland State president, Ahmed Mohamed Islan (Madobe) was addressing parliamentarians and government supporters in Kismayo. Journalists told SJS that a presidential security officer threatened to shoot if journalists approached the event hall, forcing 11 journalists to leave²⁰³.

On 10 December 2020, during a press conference in Mogadishu, the ²⁰⁴Somali Federal Government Attorney General (AG), Mr. Suleiman Mohamed Mohamud issued a warning²⁰⁵ to the independent media over a claim that they were “disseminating rumors, interviews and misleading headlines that violate the Media Law and the Media Ethics”²⁰⁶. The AG further declared that his office “was investigating cases involving media houses and journalists and that he will present to relevant courts once the ongoing investigations are complete”. It is not yet clear which media houses and journalists the AG was referring to.

On 15 December 2020, the Somali Federal Minister of Information, Osman Abokor Dubbe, through the government-run SNTV²⁰⁷, threatened²⁰⁸ independent media houses and their journalists with legal consequences for breaching the Media Law²⁰⁹ by covering “propaganda, lies, rumors and inciting the public”. The Minister was speaking as violent protests organized by the opposition groups that called for timely elections in Somalia hit parts of Mogadishu that day²¹⁰.

²⁰⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security-idUSKBN2872EP>

²⁰¹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/12/ag-declares-court-action-against-critical-media-as-restrictions-journalists-on-the-rise-ahead-of-somalia-elections/>

²⁰² <https://www.facebook.com/347322282075346/videos/703159180330530>

²⁰³ SJS interview with four of the affected reporters on the phone in Kismayo on 1 and 2 December, 2020.

²⁰⁴ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/12/ag-declares-court-action-against-critical-media-as-restrictions-journalists-on-the-rise-ahead-of-somalia-elections/>

²⁰⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/xeerlaaliyahaGuud/videos/747351982797537>

²⁰⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/xeerlaaliyahaGuud/videos/747351982797537>

²⁰⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/468010099926454/videos/193760072416626>

²⁰⁸ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/12/17/journalists-covering-protests-detained-beaten-as-information-minister-threatens-with-legal-consequences-for-breaching-media-law/>

²⁰⁹ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/08/26/somalias-new-media-law-poses-threat-to-media-freedom-and-rights-of-journalists/>

²¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/363773513701137/videos/241444214131275>

On 17 December 2020, armed Somali police attacked a group of journalist from local media and international news agencies at Zone-K in Hodan District, Mogadishu, as they were planning to cover an opposition demonstration that day²¹¹. Armed police dispersed the demonstrators (mainly young men and women) and chased²¹² the journalists.



Journalists run for shelter after police attacked a group of journalists at Zone-K in Hodan District, Mogadishu on 17 December, 2020. | Photo Credit/SJS.

On 17 December 2020, armed Somali Federal Police officers led by Waberi District Police Commissioner, Capt. Mohamed Abdukadir Mooshin, and accompanied by NISA officers stopped two Goobjoog journalists (Abdikarim Ali Adan and cameraman Abdirizak Abdullahi Fagas) in the midst of interviewing opposition supporters at the Afrik Hotel in Mogadishu. The incident took place after the police had blocked an opposition party event at the hotel²¹³. The journalists immediately left the hotel premises fearing for their safety.

FORCED INTO EXILE

Even when the world is struggling with the impact and travel restrictions caused by Covid-19 pandemic, journalists have continued fleeing the country in 2020. SJS has documented four cases of journalists who fled into exile due to the increased attacks and targeted arrests by state security and other threats from the militant group al-Shabaab²¹⁴. The majority of the journalists have fled to Turkey while the rest went to the neighboring countries for safety.

²¹¹ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=107975080902367&story_fbid=210089510690923

²¹² <https://www.facebook.com/AbdalleMumin/posts/2720391054881204>

²¹³ <https://radiokulmiye.net/2020/12/17/mustaf-dhuxulow-oo-ka-hadlay-xafladii-laga-jooyey-si-adagna-u-ee-deeyey-farmaajo-iyo-fahad/>

²¹⁴ SJS interviews with four journalists currently in the neighboring countries, Turkey and Europe on the phone between 1 November to 31 December, 2020.

DRACONIAN MEDIA BILL AMENDMENT SIGNED INTO LAW

On 30 July 2020, Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo signed the country's Media Law Amendment²¹⁵, which was before parliament since early 2019. The Law, which had already had a chilling effect on both media houses and journalists, failed to incorporate the legal comments submitted by the journalists associations²¹⁶, including the Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS), Somali Media Association (SOMA) and others.

Worryingly, this law contains problematic and restrictive provisions including several content restrictions that are vaguely worded and can be misused by authorities using sweeping interpretations. This includes prohibiting reporting on issues conflicting with "national interest", "false information", "incitement to violence and clannism" and "dissemination of propaganda". These vaguely defined provisions in the media law threaten the right to freedom of expression, as journalists would self-censor to avoid being targeted by authorities that may use the law's vague terminology to target independent reporting.

Article 18 makes it mandatory for all local and freelance journalists operating in the country to be registered under a government-run database and subsequently be issued with Identification Cards by the Ministry of Information contravening the Somali Constitution and international conventions including Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)²¹⁷ which Somalia is a signatory to, and in Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)²¹⁸.

Article 5 of this law imposes unspecified fines on journalists who contravene the law, failure to which they can be sent to jail. Regrettably, the Somali Media Law provides the country's Ministry of Information a broad mandate to control the press, providing authorities sweeping powers to bar certain individuals from practicing their journalistic profession.

CONCLUSION

Decades of conflict, coupled with drought and famine have left the country suffering one of the world's worst humanitarian and human rights crises. Despite being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other continental charters, Freedoms of Expression and Access to Information rights as well as digital rights are not respected by authorities.

As the country is preparing for its national election, violations against journalists and the media in Somalia increased by end year with virtually no investigations into these abuses.

It is critical that the Somali government and its regional states as a matter of urgency reverse these deplorable conditions journalists work under within the country. The government must respect, protect, and promote the right to freedom of expression, ensuring an end to state harassment and intimidation of journalists.

²¹⁵ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/08/26/somalias-new-media-law-poses-threat-to-media-freedom-and-rights-of-journalists/>

²¹⁶ <https://sjsyndicate.org/2020/01/23/sjs-calls-somali-president-to-withhold-and-refuse-signing-draconian-media-bill-into-a-law/>

²¹⁷ https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf

²¹⁸ https://www.achpr.org/public/Document/file/English/banjul_charter.pdf

Authorities should also thoroughly, impartially and effectively investigate the violations and abuses including physical attacks, killings and attempted killings, arbitrary arrests and intimidation of journalists. They must also guarantee the safety of all journalists and other media practitioners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS) makes the following recommendations to the Somali government, its Federal Member States and to the international community that supports Somalia's state building:

To the Somali Government and its Federal Member States:

- Direct the police, particularly those from the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), to end intimidation, obstruction, threats, beatings, arbitrary arrests, harassment or prosecution of journalists and other media practitioners;
- Ensure that police and other relevant agencies thoroughly and effectively investigate all reported cases of attacks, threats, intimidation and harassment of journalists and ensure those suspected to be responsible are brought to justice in fair trials;
- Thoroughly and effectively investigate all reported cases of officials, regardless of rank or position, threatening or harassing journalists and discipline or prosecute those suspected to be responsible for these violations;
- Urgently review the provisions of the media law, the penal code, and all other laws that impede freedom of expression and media freedom and bring the laws in line with Somalia's constitution and international human rights obligations.
- Direct government officials and security forces to allow journalists and media workers to have access to government information including not putting impediments and restrictions on accessing government buildings and interviewing public officials;
- Condemn physical attacks, killings, threats, harassment, obstruction, intimidation and arbitrary arrests of journalists and other media workers;
- Publicly commit ahead of the elections to ensure that authorities and government institutions respect, protect, promote and fulfill the right to freedom of expression, and media freedom before, during and after the elections, including by providing a conducive and safe environment for journalists and other media practitioners to report on sensitive and public interest-related issues, such as security and election related information.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

- ✓ Urge the Somali government to commit to the African Union's own principles of democracy and transparency which intrinsically link press freedom, freedom of expression and the safety of journalists;
- ✓ Publicly speak out about the importance of freedom of expression and media freedom for Somalia's peace and state building processes and urge the Somali authorities to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of violations against the press and journalists;
- ✓ Urge the Somalia government to direct government officials not to harass or threaten journalists and other media practitioners;
- ✓ Urge the Somali government and its officials to respect, protect, promote and fulfill media freedom and the rights of journalists;
- ✓ Support local civil society groups, including media freedom advocates and journalists' unions to carry out systematic monitoring and reporting on violations and abuses of the right to freedom of expression and media freedom throughout the country;
- ✓ Support media freedom advocates and journalists' unions to build the capacity of the journalists so that they continue reporting on matters concerning freedom of expression and human rights;
- ✓ Support initiatives to reform laws and regulatory institutions to bring them into compliance with Somalia's international human rights obligations including the right to freedom of expression and provide technical support and assistance to such initiatives;
- ✓ Support efforts by the Somalia government to train police and other security personnel and court officials on human rights and freedom of expression and media freedom;
- ✓ Provide support actions that promote the safety of journalists in Somalia and put pressure on authorities to address the issue of impunity for abuses and attacks against journalists.

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SJS also appreciates the invaluable support provided by the entire media community through the year as we specially note the solidarity and commitment of Goobjoog Media Group, Som News TV, Radio Kulmiye (KNN), Risaala Media Corporation, Radio Hiigsi, Radio Kaah, Horn Observer, Kalsan TV, Somali Broadcast Corporation (SBC) and MENA FN.

