



Human Rights Centre  
Somaliland

*Speaking for those who are not heard*

# Second Quaterly Report on the Situation of the Media in Somaliland

August 2017

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Human Rights Centre, Hargeisa, Somaliland

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# Introduction

Every four months, Human Rights Centre issues a quarterly report on the situation of the media in Somaliland. The report is based on monitoring and documentation carried out by the Centre. This quarterly report covers the period from 11<sup>th</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2017, in which eleven journalists were detained, one was prosecuted and five websites were blocked.

Table A: Number of journalist detentions by region.

Region	Number of Detentions
Hargeisa	8
Sool	2
Awdal	1
Saahil	0
Sanaag	0
Togdheer	0
Total	11



# Recommendations

## **To the government of Somaliland**

- Stop the criminalization of the media and halt unlawful detentions and trials of journalists.
- Respect freedom of the media and freedom of expression.
- Allow opening of new media houses and the transfer of existing media houses to new owners/management.
- Lift the ban on suspended newspapers and websites.

## **To the judiciary**

- Stop applying the Penal Code against journalists.
- Instead, ensure the application of the Press Law and the Somaliland Constitution.

## **To civil society organisations**

- Support Somaliland journalists and media houses in tackling government arrests and criminal prosecutions.
- Support decriminalisation of the media and advocate on behalf of banned newspapers.

# Detentions

From 11<sup>th</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> August 2017, 11 journalists were detained in Somaliland. Below are the details of the cases.

## **Abdirahman Arab Daud**

On 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the police arrested Abdirahman Arab Daud, a journalist with *Hangool News* website, from his office in Hargeisa. He was released on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. He was arrested for a news article accusing the Police Commissioner of nepotism and clannism. He was released after the Editor-in-Chief of *Hangool News* traded himself for Abdirahman's freedom.

## **Abdiqadir Saleban Oday, Hasan Salebaan Galaydh and Mohamed Ahmed Gaab**

Abdiqadir Saleban Oday, Hasan Salebaan Galaydh, and Mohamed Ahmed Gaab, who work for Horn Cable TV were briefly detained in Hargeisa on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. They were apprehended while they were filming a public protest against the depreciation of the Somaliland currency. They were released on the same day.

### **Ibrahim Osman Ahmed**

Ibrahim Osman Ahmed, the Editor-in-Chief of *Hangool News*, was arrested on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. He was released on 27<sup>th</sup> April after he paid a fine. He was arrested for a news article accusing the Police Commissioner of nepotism and clannism.

### **Mohamed Aden Dirir**

Mohamed Aden Dirir of *Saylac News* website was arrested in Hargeisa on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 and released a month later on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2017. Mohamed was arrested after he, at a press conference, asked the Minister of Health, Salaben Isse, a question related to his attendance and performance at the Ministry during work hours.

### **Mowlid Ismail Degeed and Mohamed Shaqale Ashour**

Mowlid Ismail Degeed of Somalinews TV and Mohamed Shaqale Ashour of *Daloon News* website were detained in Las-Anood on 1st July, 2017. They were arrested after they attended a press conference held by people who criticized an agreement concluded between the government of Somaliland and Khaatumo. They were released uncharged of any crime on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2017.

### **Guleid Ali Ibrahim**

Guleid Ali Ibrahim, of *Hadhwanaag News*, was detained in the Gabiley district of Hargeisa region on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2017 while he was covering a protest that took place there. He was released uncharged on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2017.



**Hoori Ahmed Hoori**

Hoori Ahmed Hoori, of HCTV, was detained on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 in Borama. He was released on the same day. He was not charged with any crime.

**Omar Ali Hassan**

Omar Ali Hassan of Goobjoog Media was detained on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 from Egal Airport (Hargeisa) after he returned from Mogadishu where the media outlet he works for is based. He was released on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 without charges. He was not brought to court.

## Cases

The Office of the Attorney General in Togdheer Region charged journalist Ahmed Mouse Sakaro of “insult to a public officer and substitution of a person,” according to the charge sheet dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2017. The Office of the Attorney General accuses Ahmed of insulting the Manager of Buroa Water Agency, Fathi Mohamed Abdilahi, by writing an opinion article on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 about mismanagement of finances. The Office of Attorney General also argues that Ahmed is not a journalist and as such is “guilty of substitution of a person.” Ahmed is facing the charges before Togdheer Regional Court. Togdheer is located in the east of Somaliland. Buroa is the administrative capital of Togdheer.

# Blocked Websites

On 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2017, the Regional Court of Hargeisa ordered internet providers to block five websites. The court suspended the following websites:

- [www.karinnews.com](http://www.karinnews.com)
- [www.baraarugnews.com](http://www.baraarugnews.com)
- [www.saylactoday.com](http://www.saylactoday.com)
- [www.haleelews.com](http://www.haleelews.com)
- [www.suradnews.com](http://www.suradnews.com)

According to the court decision dated 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2017, the court suspended the websites at the request of the Police and the Office of the Attorney General who accused the websites of “disseminating false news against the clans that live together in the Republic of Somaliland {and} propaganda against the officials of the State of the Republic of Somaliland.” The websites were not given a chance to defend themselves, and they were not informed of the accusations before the court decision, according to editors of the newspapers.

# About HRC

The Human Rights Centre (HRC) is a non-profit organization established in January 2013 with the aim of contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights in Somaliland. HRC was founded by lawyers who are inspired by the Bill of Rights in the Somaliland Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is registered with the Somaliland government as a non-profit-making and non-governmental organization. HRC was formed to cover the need for documentation and advocacy on human rights to help maintain the gains made by Somaliland's nascent democracy. The central policy of Human Rights Centre is creating and fostering a culture of voluntary human rights activism where committed human rights defenders with passion contribute to the protection, promotion and realization of human rights.

## **Vision**

Somaliland: a place where human rights are protected, promoted, respected and fulfilled.

## **Mission**

Human Rights Centre exists to defend and protect the rights of human beings in Somaliland.

## **Our Values**

We uphold the values of honesty, justice, and integrity for all. We aim to work with transparency, accountability, commitment and discipline. We encourage creative participation understanding the need for sustainability and respect for all. We will continue to strive for impartiality and independence while placing great value on confidentiality. Furthermore, we appreciate the importance of volunteering which forms the foundation of our organization.

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