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Somaliland: Suleiman Mohamed Adam must be released immediately

"President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal of Somaliland should immediately and unconditionally release former presidential candidate Suleiman Mohamed Adam," Amnesty International reiterated today.

Suleiman Mohamed Adam, 66, is considered by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, detained solely on account of his non-violent opinions and for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association.

He was arrested at Hargeisa Airport on 22 May 2001. He has not so far been taken to court or charged with any offence, in contravention of the international legal requirement that a person suspected of a criminal offence should be brought to court and charged within 48 hours.

According to unofficial reports Suleiman Mohamed Adam appears to be accused by the authorities of "treason" or "plotting to sabotage a planned referendum" on 31 May 2001 on amendments to Somaliland's Constitution. He is said to have also been accused of having met in Djibouti with President Ismail Omar Guelleh, who is known not to support the referendum.

Suleiman Mohamed Adam was held in incommunicado detention for seven days. On 30 May he was finally granted access to a lawyer. However, prison guards refused to allow them to communicate in confidence. Both Suleiman Mohamed Adam and his lawyer refused to talk in the presence of prison guards. He has not been allowed access to his family or medical treatment.

"The illegal detention of this prisoner of conscience puts in jeopardy everyone's right to freedom of expression and association in Somaliland," Amnesty International said.

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