

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: AFR 52/014/2008 (Public)

Date: 22 July 2008

Somalia Human Rights Day Statement

Amnesty International sends its warm greetings, appreciation and support to human rights defenders in Mogadishu and throughout Somalia on the occasion of Somali Human Rights Day 2008.

We congratulate the Dr. Ismail Jumale Human Rights Organization and the Peace and Human Rights Network for organizing today's event in Mogadishu, and salutes the many courageous and unyielding human rights activists and organisations who continue the struggle for human rights in Somalia against unimaginable challenges.

Last year in our statement on Somali Human Rights Day we wished for a better year to come. Sadly, 2008 has not brought peace but escalating attacks on Somali civil society and humanitarian aid workers.

Amnesty International condemns the human rights violations which have caused the desperate situation that human rights and humanitarian workers face in Somalia today. The recent killing of Osman Ali Ahmed, the coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme in Somalia, Mohamed Mohamud Qeyre, Deputy Director of Daryeel Bulsho Guud, and peace activist Mohamed Hassan Kulmiye, from the Centre for Research and Development, mark just three of at least fifteen lethal attacks against humanitarian and civil society in Somalia in 2008, including the killing of four World Food Programme (WFP) contracted drivers.

These killings constitute the most brutal aspect of the widespread targeting of humanitarian workers and civil society, who are also subject to non-lethal attacks including arbitrary detention, kidnapping and death threats. Two CARE Somalia workers have been abducted in the last two months, and the head of the UNHCR in Mogadishu, Hassan Mohamed Ali, known as Keynaan, was recently abducted from his home in Mogadishu.

Such attacks constitute violations of international human rights law. Yet Amnesty International has also documented a wider pattern of human rights violations which, against a backdrop of drought and widespread food insecurity, contributes to the worsening humanitarian situation facing millions of Somalis.

Amnesty International reminds all parties to the conflict in Somalia that they are responsible for ensuring that human rights and international humanitarian law are upheld in the conduct of the conflict. Amnesty International calls on all parties to cease all direct, indiscriminate and disproportionate targeting of civilians immediately, and calls on the Transitional Federal Government to protect human rights defenders, and their rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly. Amnesty International will not give up its campaign to end impunity for human rights and international humanitarian law violations and bring justice to the people of Somalia. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the establishment of an international Commission of Inquiry to investigate the violations that are occurring in Somalia.

Amnesty International will continue to advocate for justice and human rights in solidarity with Somali human rights defenders. We will continue to work with you to expose human rights violations committed in Somalia to the world.

On this Somali Human Rights Day, we wish all Somali human rights defenders the safety and freedom to defend human rights that is your due, and we commit to continue to work with you to ensure that the rights of the Somali people are respected in 2008 and beyond.