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## **Somalia: Girl stoned was a child of 13**

Contrary to earlier news reports, the girl stoned to death in Somalia this week was 13, not 23, Amnesty International can reveal.

Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow was killed on Monday, 27 October, by a group of 50 men who stoned her to death in a stadium in the southern port of Kismayo, in front of around 1,000 spectators.

Some of the Somali journalists who had reported she was 23 have told Amnesty International that this age was based upon a judgement of her age from her physical appearance.

She was accused of adultery in breach of Islamic law but, her father and other sources told Amnesty International that she had in fact been raped by three men, and had attempted to report this rape to the al-Shabab militia who control Kismayo, and it was this act that resulted in her being accused of adultery and detained. None of men she accused of rape were arrested.

“This was not justice, nor was it an execution. This child suffered a horrendous death at the behest of the armed opposition groups who currently control Kismayo,” said David Copeman, Amnesty International's Somalia Campaigner.

“This killing is yet another human rights abuse committed by the combatants to the conflict in Somalia, and again demonstrates the importance of international action to investigate and document such abuses, through an International Commission of Inquiry.”

Amnesty International has learnt that:

- Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow was reported as being 23, based upon a judgement on her physical appearance, according to one of the journalists who had reported the stoning. Her actual age was confirmed to Amnesty International by other sources, including her father.
- Her father said she had only travelled to Kismayo from Hagardeer refugee camp in north eastern Kenya three months earlier.
- She was detained by militia of the Kismayo authorities, a coalition of Al-shabab and clan militias. During this time, she was reportedly extremely distressed, with some individuals stating she had become mentally unstable.
- A truckload of stones was brought into the stadium to be used in the stoning.
- At one point during the stoning, Amnesty International has been told by numerous eyewitnesses that nurses were instructed to check whether Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow was still alive when buried in the ground. They removed her from the ground, declared that she was, and she was replaced in the hole where she had been buried for the stoning to continue.

- An individual calling himself Sheik Hayakalah, was quoted on Radio Shabelle saying: "The evidence came from her side and she officially confirmed her guilt, while she told us that she is happy with the punishment under Islamic law." In contradiction to this claim, a number of eye witnesses have told Amnesty International she struggled with her captors and had to be forcibly carried into the stadium.
- Inside the stadium, militia members opened fire when some of the witnesses to the killing attempted to save her life, and shot dead a boy who was a bystander. An al-Shabab spokesperson was later reported to have apologized for the death of the child, and said the militia member would be punished.

### **Background**

Amnesty International has campaigned to end the use of the punishment of stoning, calling it gruesome and horrific. This killing of Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow demonstrates the cruelty and the inherent discrimination against women of this punishment.

The reports on this killing should be understood within the climate of fear that armed insurgent groups such as al-Shabab have created within the areas they control in Somalia. As Amnesty International has documented previously, government officials, journalists and human rights defenders face death threats and killing if they are perceived to have spoken against al-Shabab, who have waged a campaign of intimidation against the Somali people through such killings.

Since the death, a number of individuals have told Amnesty International they have fled from Kismayo out of fear of suffering a similar fate to Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow.