

AI Index: PRE 01/047/2012  
30 January 2012

## **Somalia: Journalist killing highlights need for international action on impunity**

Amnesty International has urged the international community to call on the Somali authorities to bring to justice those responsible for attacks on journalists after the latest killing of a Mogadishu reporter.

Hassan Osman Abdi, director of the Shabelle Media Network, was shot by unidentified men outside his home in the city's Wadajir district on Saturday evening. He reportedly died on his way to hospital.

The reporter, also known as 'Hassan Fantastic', is the second journalist to be killed in the last six weeks in Somalia. The Somali authorities say they are investigating his killing.

"The numerous attacks on journalists in Somalia have been part of an attempt to silence reporting about human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict in the country," said Erwin van der Borgh, Amnesty International's Director for Africa.

"Despite Somalia's Transitional Federal Government's promises to investigate these killings, no one has ever been brought to justice for such acts. It's time that the international community takes concrete measures to tackle impunity for the killings of journalists in the country and other human rights abuses.

"Anyone found responsible for committing or ordering the killings must be brought to justice, in fair trials and without the application of the death penalty" he added.

A major international conference on Somalia will take place in London on 23 February with the aim of delivering a new international approach to the country.

"The international community must use this opportunity to discuss ways to address impunity for human rights abuses and ask the United Nations to establish an independent and international mechanism to document and investigate human rights violations and abuses in Somalia," said Erwin van der Borgh.

"This should include the threats and targeted attacks against journalists by all parties to the conflict," he added.

At least 24 journalists have been killed in Somalia since 2007, and many others injured, yet no one has been brought to justice for these attacks.

All parties to the conflict have threatened and attacked journalists and restricted press freedom.

On 18 December last year, Abdisalan Sheik Hassan, a freelance journalist for the Horn Cable TV station and Hamar radio, was shot in the head by a man wearing a government military uniform in the Hamar Jajab district in Mogadishu. He died shortly afterwards.

The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) promised to investigate Abdisalan Sheik Hassan's killing and reportedly arrested suspects as part of the investigation.

However, as far as Amnesty International is aware, no one has yet been brought to justice for the killing of Abdisalan Sheikh Hassan.

Hassan Osman Abdi is the fifth Shabelle Media Network journalist, and the third Shabelle director, to be killed since 2007.

Four of these appeared to be deliberate killings.

Shabelle Radio director Muktar Mohamed Hirabe was shot dead on 7 June 2009 in Mogadishu by unidentified gunmen.

On 1 January 2009, Radio Shabelle reporter Hassan Mayow Hassan was shot dead outside Mogadishu in the town of Afgoye, by a man wearing a government uniform.

Bashir Nur Gedi, Shabelle Radio's manager, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in his house in Mogadishu on 19 October 2007.