



Somalia: Investigate killings of journalists and hold perpetrators to account. Oral intervention at the 21st session of the UN Human Rights Council (10-28 September)

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Item 10¹: Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia *Oral statement*

Madam President,

The recent election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has been described as a turning point for Somalia and for Somali citizens. The dire human rights situation in Somalia continues to cry out for a similar turning point.

Journalists make essential contributions to good governance and play a crucially important role in the promotion and protection of human rights. Since December 2011, fourteen journalists have been killed in Somalia. Only last week, on 20 and 21 September 2011, four journalists were killed in two separate attacks. Hassan Yusuf Absuge, a journalist working for Radio Maanta, was shot and killed by unidentified men outside the radio station's offices in the Yaqshiid district of Mogadishu on 21 September 2012. Abdisatar Dahir Sabriye, Liban Ali Nurr and Abdramman Yasinwere were killed when suicide bombers attacked the Village Restaurant in the Hamarwayne district of Mogadishu on the evening of 20 September 2012. At least fifteen people died in the attacks, and scores more were injured, including seven journalists.

While the Somali authorities announced that they would investigate the cases, there have been no credible investigations or criminal prosecutions. The failure to hold the killers accountable fosters further killings and undermines Somali journalism.

Mr Bari, in your conclusions and recommendations, you call upon the government to investigate killings against journalists and other civilians. How have the authorities responded to this call? Why have such investigations not yet taken place?

Madam President,

Amnesty International urges the Human Rights Council, its members and observers to encourage and assist the new government to prioritise and implement real improvements to the human rights situation. This includes taking measures to ensure that the Somali authorities undertake prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into the killings of journalists, and bring the perpetrators to justice in fair trials and without recourse to the death penalty.

The international community must also provide for better monitoring, investigation and documentation of human rights violations and abuses in Somalia. The Human Rights Unit of the UN Political Office for Somalia should be equipped with all resources necessary to carry out more regular and in-depth human rights monitoring, documenting and public reporting. This must be in addition to the technical assistance and capacity building work carried out by the Unit under May 2012 Memorandum of Understanding.

Thank you Madam President.

¹ Item 10 on the agenda of the Human Rights Council: *Technical assistance and capacity-building*.