

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED CRITICS MUST BE RELEASED

Between 17 April and 1 May, Somaliland authorities arbitrarily arrested and detained journalist **Abdimalik Muse Oldon**, opposition youth leader **Mohamed Sidiq Dhame**, and **Jamal Abdi Muhumed**, an employee of the Ministry of the Interior. The three were arbitrarily arrested for posting on social media comments perceived as critical of the Somaliland government and public officials.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

**Attorney General
Hassan Ahmed Aden**
Hargeisa, Somaliland
Email: hassmo12@yahoo.com

Dear Attorney General,

I am writing to you regarding the cases of **Abdimalik Muse Oldon**, **Jamal Abdi Muhumed** and **Mohamed Sidiq Dhame**, who are currently detained by the Somaliland authorities solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression. The three expressed views on social media perceived to be critical of the Somaliland government.

Journalist **Abdimalik Muse Oldon** was arrested by Somaliland police on 17 April from his hometown of Buraq for criticizing the president of Somaliland on his Facebook page, and transferred to Hargeisa. He was formally charged on 6 June with spreading anti-national propaganda and disseminating false news against Abaarso School. **Abdimalik** is currently detained at the Hargeisa Central Prison.

Jamal Abdi Muhumed, an employee of the Ministry of Interior, was arrested at his office in Hargeisa on 24 April over his Facebook posts criticizing the effectiveness of police services in Somaliland. He was charged on 19 June for insulting the police and insulting a public officer. **Jamal** is currently held at the Hargeisa Central police station.

Mohamed Sidiq Dhame, the leader of the opposition Waddani party's youth wing, was arrested on 1 May at his home in Hargeisa. **Mohamed** was arrested over a Facebook post in which he criticized the state of emergency imposed on three districts in the Sanaag region. He was formally charged on 8 June with offending the honour and prestige of the president, and incitement to violence. On 27 June, the Hargeisa regional court found him guilty of offending the honour of the president and sentenced him to six months in prison. **Mohamed** is currently detained at the Hargeisa Central Prison.

The arrest of the three individuals is arbitrary, as it was carried out without a warrant, hence violating Article 25(2) of the Somaliland Constitution, which states that the police must attain a warrant from a judge before arresting and detaining any individual.

I am calling on you to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of **Abdimalik Muse Oldon**, **Jamal Abdi Muhumed** and **Mohamed Sidiq Dhame**, as they are being detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression. I also urge the government to fully respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights to freedom of expression and personal liberty of everyone in Somaliland.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There has been an increase in harassment and intimidation of government critics and clampdowns on peaceful dissent in Somaliland since the current government took office in December 2017. The authorities have targeted poets and journalists, as well as anyone perceived to be in disagreement with key state policies, or critical of public officials.

Somaliland's 2001 Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press but the 1964 penal code includes a number of vaguely defined and , very broad criminal offences, including "offending the honour and prestige of the head of state, insulting a public officer or institution, or contempt against the nation, state or flag", which are punishable by up to three years' imprisonment.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [English, Somali]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [08 08 2019]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: [Abdimalik Muse Oldon (He/him, Jamal Abdi Muhumed (He/him) and Mohamed Sidiq Dhame (He/him)]

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: [N/A]