

# EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

## Public Statement

**EHAHRD-Net Index: SOMA 004/005/2008 (Public)**

15<sup>th</sup> January 2008

### **KAMPALA: EHAHRD-Net DEPLORES GLOOMY SITUATION OF THE MEDIA IN SOMALIA**

For the journalists in Somalia, the Year 2008 has started from where the previous one ended in terms of threats and harassment of journalists.

EHAHRD-Net has continuously monitored the events surrounding the media. Already in the first few weeks of the New Year, the situation looks gloomy. According to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), EHAHRD-Net's founding member, at least two journalists have been injured while two other media persons have been arrested. The injured are; Abdikheyr Mohammed Jama, a presenter and technician with *Radio Galkayo* from the semi-autonomous northern province of Puntland and Mohammed Bashir Hashi (Somaliweyn radio) who was injured in Wardhigley on Thursday January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008 during fire exchange between the authorities of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the insurgents. Those arrested are; Bashir Mohammed Abdulkadir, a reporter for the privately owned *Radio Somaliweyn*, Abdirahman Mohamed working with the same radio station, and Mohammed Shidane working for *Radio Banadir*.

“As the TFG Parliament discusses the newly proposed media law, the authorities must ensure practical measures of protecting journalists as a first step to show their determination to defend freedom of the press. All the actors on Somalia's political playing field must respect and uphold press freedom as enshrined in the Transitional Federal Charter and in recognized regional and international human rights instruments. With at least 50 journalists having fled the situation in Mogadishu only in the past four months, the future of the media in Somalia can only be said to be catastrophic and as such, both the TFG and the insurgents must desist from inflicting further misery on an institution that is widely considered as the fourth arm of government,” says Hassan Shire Sheikh, Chairperson EHAHRD/Net.

At least 8 journalists were killed in Somalia in 2007, scores of others were injured, while at least 50 fled Mogadishu in the past four months and are currently scattered in different countries with little or no assistance.

#### APPEAL:

- EHAHRD-Net appeals to the TFG authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the arrested journalists and allow them unhampered continuation of their media work;

- EHAHRD-Net further appeals to the insurgents, the Ethiopian forces and the TFG to respect media freedom without fail. All warring factions must desist from any further attacks on journalists as a media black-out would constitute a further compromise of the rights of the Somali people;
- The Network calls upon the UN, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and all other concerned international humanitarian bodies to use their relevant mandates to ensure that Somali authorities desist from the ill-treatment of journalists; and that those already in exile receive adequate support not only to offer them a lease to life, but to enable them continue monitoring the situation back home.

All Network members are encouraged to write to the Somali authorities furthering this appeal.

Send appeals to:

The Somali Ambassador in Kenya, asking for them to be forwarded to Somalia's President, Col. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed: TFG Ambassador, Mohamed Ali Nur,  
PO Box 623-00606  
Jabavu Road, Hurlingham  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Email: [mali@somaliembassy.co.ke](mailto:mali@somaliembassy.co.ke)  
Salutation: Dear Sir

For further information, please contact

Tumusiime Kabwende Deo  
Press Officer, +256-712-075721