

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

Urgent Memo

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KAMPALA: EHAHRD-Net regrets and vehemently condemns the killing of HornAfrik Director today

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) condemns the killing of Mr Said Tahlil Ahmed, the Director of the HornAfrik, one of the country's leading independent radio station, Mr Tahlil Ahmed was shot dead today in Mogadishu's Bakara market by unknown gunmen.

In the same attack a number of other journalists were also injured notably Mr Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe, the Director of another prominent radio station, Shabelle Radio; the journalists were on their way to a press conference which had been called by the Islamist militia Al-Shabab.

The motives of the attacks are not yet known but it is being reported that the killing might be linked to the extensive coverage given by HornAfrik to the recent elections in Djibouti. This is the second journalist killed in Somalia in 2009 alone.

This highlights very clearly the fragility of the new government given that Al-Shabab does not support the newly elected President, Mr Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.

“ We are deeply saddened by this most recent killing; it reveals very clearly the urgent need for the international community and the African Union to put in place measures which will ensure the security of the Somali population as a whole and more specifically of human rights defenders, notably journalist, given the essential role they can play in helping bring about lasting peace in this country” says Hassan Shire Sheikh, the Chairperson of EHAHRD-Net

EHAHRD-Net calls on the international community and the African Union to support the establishment of independent and impartial accountability mechanisms and to ensure the establishment of a permanent human rights presence on the ground.

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