

Domestic Media Monitoring Report: Somalia

Laura Metcalfe

August 17th-August 25th

Headlines:

- 1) Sky FM and Shabelle News Network Shut Down By Government; journalists detained, allegedly tortured.
- 2) Military Court Sentences Al Shabab Suspects
- 3) Demonstration against discrimination in Kismayo

1) Sky FM and Shabelle News Network Shut Down by Government; journalists detained, allegedly tortured

[Somali Radio Station Shut, Staff Seized](#)

Kismaayo.com. Independent media, dated August 17th, 2014

- Security forces stormed the offices of Radio Shabelle, one of Mogadishu's main radio stations, arresting 20 staff members and seizing equipment. The station was accused of broadcasting "negative" accounts against military operations against militia leader Ahmed Dai.
- Sky FM Radio, which operates from the same building, was also taken off the air.

- The government has shut down radio Shabelle at least three times previously. It has also been threatened by al Shabab fighters, and several of its journalists and two directors have been killed.

[Somalia: NUSOJ welcomes the release of the 16 Shabelle and SKY staffers arrested on Friday](#)

RBC Radio. Independent radio, dated August 17th

- The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) welcomed the release of the 16 Shabelle and SKY staffers who had been arrested during government raids, and urged the government to provide the remaining three staffers with fair trials.
- The charges against the three men still in custody have not been released, and they are expected to appear in court shortly.
- NUSOJ hopes the government will provide the detained journalists with a platform to defend themselves and access justice.

[Govt Forces Step Up Oppressive Raids on Shabelle and Sky FM.](#)

Shabelle.net, Independent media, dated August 19th

- Government forces conducted another raid on the premises of Radio Shabelle and Sky FM, dismantling and confiscating equipment
- Earlier during the day, Shabelle had briefly gone on air before being quickly taken off by government forces.
- Intelligence forces are still holding Abdimalik Yusuf Mohamud and two other journalists. Shabelle confirms that Mr. Abdimalik has been tortured.

[IFJ demands immediate release of Somali journalists following government attacks on media freedom](#)

Puntaland Post, Independent, dated August 19th, 2014

- The International Federation of Journalists has condemned the raids on independent media in Mogadishu and expressed concern for the well-being of the three remaining detained journalists amid reports that they have been tortured
- The government raid is believed to have been carried out in retaliation to news reports and interviews broadcast the night before that talked about an interview that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud had given PBS television
- A number of journalists and politicians interviewed by Shabelle strongly criticized the president's response to a question regarding attacks on independent media, in which he cited Al Shabab's infiltration of independent media stations.
- NUSOJ has reported that Abdimalik Yusuf Mohamud is in critical condition after being tortured in order to extract a confession. The other two journalists have also reportedly been tortured.

[Mogadishu intelligence chief and Mohamed Ibrahim assert Radio Shabelle and SKY FM will not be opened again.](#)

Shabelle.net, Independent media, dated August 20th

- Mogadishu Security and Intelligence Chief, Colonel Mohammed Adan Koofi, and Mohamed Ibrahim Isaq, who illegitimately claims to represent NUSOJ have both stated that Radio Shabelle and Sky FM will not be reopened again.
- The statement came alongside the release of 16 detained journalists and media workers.
- The prisoners were held in chains while Koofi demanded that the journalists work for the intelligence and security agency, before threatening to arrest them again if they reported his request.
- Isaq then told the journalists that since the stations would not be reopened, anyone who wants a job should come see him to discuss intelligence work or a job at Radio Mogadishu: “He equalized journalism and intelligence as similar work that one can switch to anytime.”
- Freed journalists stated that Koofi and Isaq are colluding to arrest journalists and crack down on independent media.

[Somali Radio Closure: Shabelle manager ‘in hiding’](#)

Shabelle.net. Republished on jowhar.com, Independent media , dated August 21st

- The manager of Shabelle Radio has told the BBC he has been in hiding since authorities took it off the air.
- Mohamed Musa denied accusations that the station was spreading hate messages.
- The UN-backed government issued a statement saying that the station had spread disharmony among Mogadishu’s clans.
- Mr. Musa denied having broadcast either in favor of, or against the government’s recent disarmament program, which has contributed to tension in the capital.
- Media organizations have condemned the arrests and called for the detainees to be charged according to the constitution.
- Mr. Musa admitted Shabelle has had a fractious relationship with the government, which evicted it from a state-owned building last year.
- Musa added that he fears for the safety of his colleagues who remain in detention.

[Clarification on the 15th August Radio Shabelle/Radio SKY FM incident](#)

Jowhar.com, RBC Radio. Independent media, dated August 21st

- Dr. Ahmed Ali Dahir, the Attorney General, has clarified the incident related to the closure of Radio Shabelle and Radio SKY FM, stating that that the operation was conducted legally and in response to deliberate incitement and provocation carried out by the two stations.
- The stations were calling upon the people to rise up “in an illegal, clannish manner” and attack the security forces. As a result of these broadcasts there were demonstrations in some parts of the city that lead to the deaths of innocent people.
- The three men who remain in detention are believed to be responsible for the provocations, and the court granted an extension on their imprisonment in order to

conclude an investigation into the matter. After the authorities conclude their investigations, the AG confirms that them men will be brought to trial.

- The AG stated that the Banadir Regional Judge was dispatched to look into allegations of torture, but found no substance to the accusations.

Social Media

*Reports of the raids on Shabelle and SKY FM sprang up quickly on Twitter. Many independent journalists voiced their support for the detained journalists; a number of citizens took to social media to voice their displeasure with government actions.

Tuuryare @Tuuryare10 · Aug 17
#Somalia: all the #Shabelle and #SKY reporters are in critical condition after security forces tortured them the prison

Tuuryare @Tuuryare10 · Aug 17
Noradin added that all the released journalists were threatened to be killed if they come back to Shabelle for working

Tuuryare @Tuuryare10 · Aug 17
The chairman of the two medias tortured and refused to be eating daily food and watery and also shocked from torturing: NORADIN, journalist

Tuuryare @Tuuryare10 · Aug 17
Noradin said that Chairman of Shabelle and SKY medias were tortured in the prison, adding the manager remains in the prison

Tuuryare @Tuuryare10 · Aug 17
JUST: #Somalia: Arrested #Shabelle and #SKY journalists released but three of them remain in the prison for trail in the high court

Retweeted by Live From Mogadishu



Jamal Osman @JamalMOsman · 9h

Colleagues of local journos arrested in #Mogadishu last week accuse #Somali forces of beating, torture & electrocution against journalists.

← 5 ★ 1 ...



Live From Mogadishu @Daudoo · 6h

Following the closure of Shabelle & Sky FM radio stations, more pressure is being mounted on #Mogadishu media outlets. #Somalia #Journalism

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More



Live From Mogadishu
@Daudoo



Following

Radio Shabelle is the media outlet to receive the most scrutiny from Somali authorities, closed down 3 times since '07.
#Somalia #Journalism

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RETWEET

1



9:47 AM - 18 Aug 2014

-  **Harun Maruf** @harunmaruf · Aug 17
Breaking: Somali Govt frees 16 staffers of Shabelle and SKY FM radios detained on Friday after security raid; 3 still held - #NUSOJ reports.
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮
-  **Harun Maruf** @harunmaruf · Aug 17
Breaking: Former NGO worker turned Activist Mohamud Dahir Qoley arre by the security forces for "inciting hostility" towards the Govt.
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮
-  **Ali Mohamoud** @AliMohamoud · Aug 17
#PRT Where does this #SFG's paranoid behaviour come from? Copying E era paranoia? @harunmaruf
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮
-  **Adam A. Omar** @evolvingprimate · Aug 17
@AliMohamoud @harunmaruf This government has all the dictatorial tendencies of the former communist regime & none of its virtues
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮

 **a kanyare** @rush7615 ⚙️ + Fol

@evolvingprimate @AliMohamoud
@harunmaruf this government thinks to
open dialogue with a public is sign of
weakness

-  **Adam A. Omar** @evolvingprimate · Aug 17
@rush7615 @AliMohamoud @harunmaruf It's more of a paranoia. It knows transparency will expose the latent corruption inherent in the govt
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More
-  **Sadiq (TrendSetter\$)** @RetroKidV · Aug 17
@evolvingprimate @rush7615 @AliMohamoud @harunmaruf journalist or activists are not above the rule of law
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More
-  **a kanyare** @rush7615 · Aug 17
@RetroKidV @evolvingprimate @AliMohamoud @harunmaruf if they even said the wrong thing r y gonna shutdown every media
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More
-  **Sadiq (TrendSetter\$)** @RetroKidV · Aug 17
@rush7615 @evolvingprimate @AliMohamoud @harunmaruf there has to be an impartial investigation ,media is a tool of war and is a legit target
⬅️ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More

2) Military Court Sentences Al Shabab Suspects to Death

Seven Al Shabab Members Receive Death Penalty

Mareeg Media, Independent media, dated August 21st 2014.

- Somalia's military courts handed down convictions on 13 prisoners, 7 of whom were sentenced to death.
- The men were accused of murdering a fellow inmate, Abdiaziz Muhidin Hiraabe.
- The other 6 men were sentenced to life in prison.
- The men who were sentenced to death have three weeks to appeal the decision.

[Seven Al Shabab Members Receive Death Penalty](#)

Dalsan Radio, Independent radio, August 21st, 2014

- Seven people were sentenced to death after being accused of jointly killing a prison inmate. Six other men were sentenced to life in prison.
- A court spokesperson stated that the men who had been sentenced to life in prison could appeal within three weeks of the verdict.

[Somalia Sentences Terror Suspects to Death Amid International Outcry](#)

Garowe Online, Independent media, dated August 24th, 2014

- Two al Shabab suspects were sentenced to death after being convicted of killing a traffic policeman during Ramadan
- One of the men sentenced to death was absent, while two other men were sentenced to life in prison and six months in jail, respectively. A fifth suspect was freed after the court found him not guilty.
- The sentencing comes as international attention has called the military court's justice into question. Human Rights Watch has expressed concern over the mass executions being carried out by Somalia's military courts, saying that trials have fallen short of international standards.
- Thirteen such executions have been carried out so far in 2014.

[Somalia: Military Court Sentences Four Al Shabab Alleged Suspects.](#)

RBC Radio Online, Independent, August 24th, 2014

- Somalia's military court has sentenced four al Shabab suspects who were convicted of murdering a traffic police officer in Mogadishu.
- Two suspects were sentenced to death, while the two other men got sentences of life in prison and six months in prison. A fifth man was found not guilty and released.
- The military court urged young fighters with Al Shabab to surrender to government forces, promising full protection to those who give themselves up, and harsh punishments to those who continue to oppose the government.

[Summary Executions in Somalia](#)

Originally published on al Jazeera, republished by Horseed Media and Garowe Online , Independent, dated August 24th, 2014

- The article examines the rising number of rapid executions carried out by Mogadishu's military courts, arguing that the trend should call into question the quality of justice on display.

- Referencing a HRW report that details the failure of military trials to meet international standards, the author calls for trials that respect the presumption of innocence, do not extract confessions under duress, allow civilians to be tried in civilian courts, and ensure adequate time for appeal.
- The majority of those executed have been accused of being al Shabab members or fighters
- The military has tried defendants for a broad range of crimes outside its jurisdiction, notably crimes against civilians. Death sentences have been carried out too rapidly for defendants to file for appeal, or allow for a presidential pardon.
- Despite claims that trying civilians in military courts is justified under Somalia's military penal code, there is no legal basis for this, including in cases involving al Shabab members not taking part in hostilities.
- The chairman of the court, Col Abdirahman Mohamed Tuyare told the media earlier this month that parents of al Shabab suspects would be arrested (allegedly, some are already in detention). The article states this is a form of collective punishment contrary to the principles of justice.
- Defendants are held in facilities run by Somalia's national intelligence agency. These facilities are notorious for their ill treatment of prisoners, and it is likely that the confessions obtained in interrogations were obtained under duress.
- The Somali National Television has undermined the defendant's chance of a fair trial by broadcasting interviews with them during their detention and trial that describe their alleged involvement in attacks.

3) Demonstration Against Discrimination in Kismayo

[Demonstration Against Discrimination in Kismayo](#)

Mareeg.com, Somaliland Press. Independent media, dated August 22nd, 2014

- Hundreds from the oppressed Somali Bantu Wagosha community demonstrated in Kismayo against killings, arrests, and other mistreatment carried out by Ahmed Madobe's clan administration.
- The demonstrators chanted slogans aimed against the system of clan administration. One demonstrator told the media that mistreatment of civilians has risen since clan militants entered Kismaayo in October 2012.
- The militants are accused of killing and arresting innocent members of the Bantu community, as well as looting, and forcing some to leave the city.
- An unnamed AU military commander confirmed the claims of the demonstrators, who accuse Kenyan forces of aiding the clan militants.
- The demonstrators also oppose both moves to hold reconciliation talks in Kismayo, and military operations to liberate areas controlled by al Shabab.
- The Bantus say that any reconciliation will be meaningless, since they fear that they will be unable to select their own representatives, and instead will be represented in any talks by members of the Eastleigh suburb in Nairobi who have been carefully selected by Ahmed Madobe.

- The Bantu state that they oppose military operations against al Shabab only because of fears that Ahmed Madobe will settle his people in Wagosha land, a policy that has been used by Somali governments in the past. The Wagosha fear that talks of refugee repatriation is aimed at grabbing the land of the Wagosha community.
- Somali Bantu leaders in the region believe that the only solution is for the government to recognize their rights. Otherwise, they will need to take up arms to defend themselves.