

## **SOMALI DOMESTIC MEDIA MONITORING REPORT**

**September 19, 2010**

**Stacy Topouzova**

**September 19, 2010**

### **External Media Source**

*Note: Though domestic media has partially addressed this issue, BBC Monitoring published a substantive article on the recent closure for Somali Radio Station HornAfrik. The following are direct excerpts:*

- Somalia's Radio HornAfrik, one of the most influential radios in the country, has been off air since 17 September. Two Somali news websites have given different reasons for the station's lack of transmissions.
- One website indicated that the hardline Al-Shabab Islamists may have forcefully taken over the station and dismantled its equipment and sent away staff, while another website said the station may have shut down following infighting among its top ranks.
- Al-Shabab take-over
- On 19 September, the news website of the Shabelle Media Network reported that the Al-Shabab fighters had "forced their way" into Radio HornAfrik and HornAfrik TV premises at around 1700 gmt on 18 September, taking away all radio and TV equipment and sending away staff. Radio HornAfrik has been based in Bakaaraha market, an area in Mogadishu controlled by the Islamists.
- Shabelle website said the Al-Shabab group also took away the equipment of Capital Voice radio, another FM station with the same ownership as Radio HornAfrik and broadcasting from the same building.
- "The Al-Shabab soldiers are reported to have destroyed the cassettes in the library. The soldiers are said to have taken away equipment such as the FM and satellite equipment," Shabelle website reported.
- HornAfrik TV had been off air for many days before the Radio HornAfrik also stopped broadcasting. The website of HornAfrik ([www.hornafrik.com](http://www.hornafrik.com)) was last updated on 16 September.
- Internal dispute
- The privately-owned Jowhar news portal on 19 September reported that Radio HornAfrik had been off air for the second day due to infighting among its top managers.
- "The dispute, which has been dragging on for a while now and has resulted in the suspension of the station's programmes, has been sparked by attempts to replace senior managers of the organization who have failed to pay employee salaries," the Jowhar news portal reported.
- The website said operations at the station had in the recent past slowed down following tension between reporters and senior managers. On 3 September, Dayniile website carried a lengthy report saying there had been massive corruption and mismanagement at HornAfrik.
- Influence waning
- Radio HornAfrik was founded in late 1999. Owned by a group of Somali businessmen, it has been the most popular and influential indigenous station in the country. However, two Somali website have said that the radio's influence is waning.
- According to the Dayniile website, HornAfrik has "lost listeners. The satellite section of the radio is now on and off. HornAfrik TV has been forgotten altogether and the Capital Voice studios are no more." (Dayniile website 3 September 2010)
- Jowhar website on 19 September said: "HornAfrik used to be one of the most financially stable radio stations in the country having had broadcasting contracts from both the BBC and VOA. The stations' rating has in the recent past dwindled after Hisb al-Islam [another Islamist group] banned it from playing any music or songs on air."

- Hisb al-Islam is another Islamist group operating in Somalia, although it is seen as less radical than the Al-Shabab. Since April 2010, Radio HornAfrik has observed the order by the Hisb al-Islam banning radio stations in Somalia from playing music.
- The radio is a BBC World Service re-broadcasting partner. In addition to its main channel (on 99.9 FM), the station has been relaying transmissions by FM transmitters in Baydhabo (Baidoa), Beled Weyne, Kismaayo and Marka (Merca).
- It also runs the Capital Voice radio (on 88.8 FM) and a cable TV service for Mogadishu.