



Report: Media Suppression and the Historical Struggle of Somali Journalists

Issued by: Associated Somali Journalists (ASOJ)

Date: May 2025

Introduction

The media in Somalia has long been a pillar of public awareness, accountability, and civic education. Despite its crucial role, journalism in Somalia is one of the most dangerous professions in the world. Somali journalists have endured decades of persecution, harassment, and violence, particularly during periods of political instability and armed conflict. Today, those challenges remain and have reached an alarming level under the current Federal Government of Somalia.

A History of Risk and Sacrifice

Since the collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991, journalists have operated in an environment lacking rule of law, protection, and media freedom. Many were killed during the civil war, while others were forced into exile. In the last two decades, dozens of Somali reporters and media workers have been assassinated for their work. According to press freedom watchdogs, Somalia continues to rank among the worst countries for impunity in crimes against journalists.

Journalists have not only faced threats from militant groups like Al-Shabaab but also from

government authorities. Both state and non-state actors have used violence and legal harassment to silence independent voices. Arbitrary arrests, censorship, and surveillance are tools frequently used against those seeking to expose corruption and injustice.

Current Crisis: Escalating Abuse and Intimidation

In recent years, and especially under the current administration, suppression of media freedom has intensified. Numerous journalists have been detained in Mogadishu and other major cities. Reports from human rights organizations indicate that in some cases, journalists have been filmed in degrading and humiliating conditions while in custody, including while undressed. These acts are intended to instill fear and deter others from practicing independent journalism or interviewing critics of the government.

The Associated Somali Journalists (ASOJ) has documented multiple cases of intimidation, coercion, and bribery aimed at silencing critical media. Independent journalists and media houses reporting on corruption, nepotism, and governance failures are systematically targeted. Some reporters are unlawfully imprisoned, while others are pressured into accepting bribes in exchange for silence.

ASOJ's Call to Action

ASOJ condemns these human rights violations in the strongest terms. We urge:

- The Federal Government of Somalia to immediately cease all forms of harassment and persecution of journalists.
- The international community, including the European Union, African Union, and United Nations, to pressure Somali authorities to uphold press freedom.
- All media freedom organizations and human rights defenders to speak out and offer support to

Somali journalists at risk.

Conclusion

The survival of democracy and good governance in Somalia depends on a free and vibrant media. Somali journalists have already paid the ultimate price to keep the public informed. The world must not remain silent while the very voices that defend democracy are being crushed. It is time to stand with the truth, and with those who risk everything to tell it.

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