

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/djibouti-radio-journalist-threatened-and-03-02-2012,41800.html>

Africa - Djibouti

Abducted and tortured

Radio journalist threatened and tortured for 24 hours

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Reporters Without Borders roundly condemns radio journalist **Farah Abadid Hildid's** abduction by the police yesterday and the threats and torture to which he was subjected during the 24 hours he was held. Hildid works for *La Voix de Djibouti*, a radio station that broadcasts on the shortwave from Europe and is now also available on the Internet.

He described his ordeal to Reporters Without Borders by telephone two hours after his release:

"I was in Djibouti City yesterday waiting for a meeting. It was 11:30 am. Two men in a car with tinted windows stopped next to me. It was a uniformed policeman and a man in plain clothes. They asked me to get in. I refused but they forced me into the car. They blindfolded me so that I did not know where they were taking me. I found myself in a cell. They removed my clothes and handcuffed me, and that is how I spent the night, sleeping on the floor.

"They beat my feet very violently with pieces of rubber. They also broke my glasses. 'We've had enough of you,' they said. 'You must stop broadcasting information about us. You must stop bothering the police and the Department for Investigation and Documentation. It will be the worse for you if you continue.' At midday today, they brought me my clothes and blindfolded me again. Then they drove me to a piece of waste ground in the Gabode 4 district and left me there."

Reporters Without Borders has decided to refer this matter to the United Nations special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and will remain in regular contact with Hildid in order to be kept informed of his security situation.

"The physical mistreatment and psychological torture inflicted on this journalist are a disgrace to Djibouti's authorities," Reporters Without Borders said. "We call on them to put an immediate end to this sort of intimidation. If anything happens to Hildid again, we will know who is responsible."

Hildid was detained twice in 2011 and was tortured and mistreated both times. This was confirmed by medical examinations after both periods in detention. The first time he was arrested, in February 2011, he was held for more than four months in Gabode prison on a charge of "participating in an insurrectional movement."

The second time he was arrested, on 21 November, he was charged with encouraging an illegal demonstration and insulting the president. He was released four days later after being placed under the supervision of an investigating judge attached to the supreme court.

As a result of these and other events, Djibouti fell 49 places in the 2011-2012 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index and is now ranked 159th out of 179 countries.
