

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/djibouti-supreme-court-urged-to-free-31-10-2012,43625.html>

Africa - Djibouti

Partial relief

Journalist freed conditionally after being held more than three months

20 November 2012

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that the journalist **Houssein Ahmed Farah** was finally released on 18 November after being held without trial for more than three months.

"Farah has finally been let out of jail thanks to the determination of his lawyer, Zakaria Abdillahi, who submitted a weekly release request that was unsuccessful until this week, when it was granted," Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire said.

"While it is a relief to know he is no longer in prison, his release is conditional and he is still under judicial control. We call for the withdrawal of all the charges against him. We continue to be worried by the way the judicial authorities are handling his case. We are also disturbed by the attempts to intimidate his lawyer."

A reporter for *La Voix de Djibouti*, an exile news website, Farah was arrested on 8 August and had been held since 11 August in the capital's Gabode prison despite his poor health and the lack of evidence for any of the charges against him.

He is accused of evading judicial control and distributing "forged" voter cards on behalf of a political party dissolved by presidential decree.

31.10.2012 - Supreme court urged to free journalist held without trial

Reporters Without Borders and Avocats Sans Frontières (Lawyers Without Borders) call on Djiboutian supreme court president Kadidja Abeba to release **Houssein Ahmed Farah**, a journalist detained without trial for nearly three months.

A correspondent for *La Voix de Djibouti*, an exile news website, Farah was arrested on 8 August and has been held since 11 August in the capital's Gabode prison. After an appeal court rejected his request for a provisional release, he appealed to the supreme court, which began examining his case yesterday and has deferred a decision until 5 November.

"This journalist has been languishing in prison for the past 84 days on the basis of dubious charges," Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire said. "This situation is both irregular and shocking. We ask for Farah to be granted a provisional release so that he can be reunited with his family while waiting for this case to come to trial."

"Farah continues to be in very poor health, and the prison conditions are just making it worse," said François Cantier, honorary president of Lawyers Without Borders-France and head of the Lawyers Without Borders Network Project. "For this reason, we join his lawyer, Zakaria Abdillahi, in requesting his release."

After writing to the Djiboutian authorities, Reporters Without Borders referred the case to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on 18 September, asking it to intercede as a matter of urgency because of the worrying state of Farah's health.

Reporters Without Borders also cited Farah's situation in its submission to the UN Human Rights Council as part of Djibouti's Universal Periodic Review.

Farah is accused of evading the judicial control to which he has been subjected since June 2011 on baseless charges of "participating in an insurrectional movement" (for which he spent four months in preventive detention in Gabode) and distributing "forged" voter cards on behalf of a political party dissolved by presidential decree.

Two people arrested during the Farah investigation that the prosecutor-general began on 15 September subsequently testified to an investigating judge that they were forced to sign statements incriminating Farah that were written in advance by the police. These two persons have since been freed.

[More information on the Farah case.](#)

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