

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/somalie-another-news-outlet-bites-the-dust-09-04-2014,46110.html>

Africa - Somalia

Arbitrary closure

Another news outlet bites the dust in police raid

9 April 2014

Reporters Without Borders is very disturbed by yesterday's police raid on the headquarters of the independent daily *Haatuf* in Hargeisa, the capital of Somalia's breakaway northwestern territory of Somaliland, which has resulted in the newspaper's closure.

"The sudden occupation and closure of this newspaper's premises by the police is absolutely outrageous and constitutes the latest in a disturbing series of attacks on independent media in recent months in Somaliland," said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk.

"If the region's authorities feel defamed by a newspaper's content, they can at least adhere to the basic legal procedures instead of launching a police raid. We call on the police to immediately end their occupation and to permit the reopening of *Haatuf* and other regional news outlets that have been closed arbitrarily."

Ahmed Ali Egge, the editor of *Haatuf's* Somali-language version, said armed police raided the newspaper yesterday as today's issue was being prepared, forcing journalists to abandon their offices and flee.

The police said the Hargeisa regional court had ordered the newspaper's closure for publishing "false and malicious" information about local officials. But the newspaper's staff was unaware of any judicial proceedings.

During the days preceding the raid and again yesterday, *Haatuf* published articles accusing energy minister Hussein Abdi Duale and interior minister Ali Mohamed Waran Ade of corruption and embezzlement.

This is the third time that an independent media has been closed in an act of censorship in Somaliland in the past four months.

Information minister Abdullahi Dhir Ukusen rescinded the licence of *Universal TV's* Somaliland bureau on 3 February for "insulting" Somaliland President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo by portraying him in cartoon during its Sunday comedy programme.

On 13 December, the police raided Hubaal News Network, and arrested two of its journalists. Three days later, the paper was closed, with the police chief claiming that he had a warrant for all the staff, and remains so until this day. An arrest warrant had been issued in June 2013, but a Somaliland court rescinded it in September. The legality of the closure is still a matter of dispute.

Between 3 December 2013 and 3 January 2014, at least 11 journalists were arbitrarily arrested in Somaliland.

Somalia is ranked 176th out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).
