

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/somalia-authorities-arrest-journalist-keep-21-11-2013,45495.html>

Africa - Somalia

Persecution

Authorities arrest journalist, keep hounding Radio Shabelle

21 November 2013

Reporters Without Borders deplores *Radio Shabelle* journalist **Mohamed Bashir Hashi's** arrest yesterday and the government's continuing harassment of this radio station and other independent media.

Hashi had posted a video on the *Radio Shabelle* website in which he interviewed a young female reporter describing her alleged rape by two male journalists. Hashi and the woman were later arrested after one of the two incriminated journalists filed a complaint against them.

"We call on the authorities to immediately release Hashi and the young woman he interviewed," Reporters Without Borders said. "This arrest shows the government's determination to silence any form of criticism, whatever the subject. It also shows the urgency of the need for the government to review its priorities on human rights and freedom of information."

"We welcome the response from the United Nations, which stressed the importance of freedom of information, and we urge the international community to adopt concrete measures to ensure respect for this freedom, which is constantly flouted in what is Africa's deadliest country for journalists."

Abdiimalik Yusuf, the head of *Shabelle Media Network* that owns *Radio Shabelle*, was also briefly arrested yesterday on the pretext that the camera used to film the interview belonged to *Radio Shabelle*. Yusuf was released but Hashi and the woman are still held.

This is not the first time that the authorities have arrested a rape victim who dared to denounce her attackers. Another young girl and the journalist who interviewed her were sentenced to a year in prison in February. They were eventually released two months later following international criticism.

Commenting on the latest rape allegation and arrests, UN special representative for Somalia Nicholas Kay yesterday described "legal representation, proper investigation and media freedom" as "important issues."

Radio Shabelle's website is the station's only remaining space for free expression as [it has been unable to broadcast since 26 October](#), when the police evicted its journalists from its offices and seized its equipment.

Reporters Without Borders and members of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) had reacted to the eviction threat by sending an open letter [\[1\]](#) to the Somali authorities and western governments. It has not received a reply.

The authorities finally allowed *Radio Shabelle* employees into the station's former premises on 16 November in order to recover radio and video equipment but they found it all damaged and unusable.

The information ministry is meanwhile reported to have explicitly refused to give *Radio Shabelle* a broadcasting permit, although it has issued permits to other Mogadishu-based radio stations.

Somali is ranked 175th out of 179 countries in [the 2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

Photo : AFP

[1] Download the Reporters Without Borders letter to the Somali prime minister:



**Open letter from
Reporters
Without Border to
the Somali Prime
Minister**

You can download those documents on our website :

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