

URGENT ACTION

MEN CONVICTED FOR EXERCISING FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mohamed Kayse Mohamoud and Boqor Osman aw Muhamed Mohamed have been convicted for publicly exercising their rights to the freedom of expression.

On 26 April, a Hargeisa judge sentenced **Boqor Osman aw Muhamed Mohamed**, a traditional figure commonly known as Burmadow, to five years in prison for “bringing the state into contempt” and “spreading false news.” While Muhamed was attending the inauguration of an elder in the Puntland region of Somalia, he called for Puntland and Somaliland to withdraw their troops from the Sool region. According to the judge, his statement “weakened the existence of the sovereignty of Somaliland and denounced the national army”. The judge in Muhamed’s case, Ahmed Dalmar Ismail, denied him access to his lawyer or time to prepare his defence even though he repeatedly asked for both. Instead on the day of the trial, the judge only heard the prosecution’s case and immediately sentenced Muhamed on the same day.

On 7 February, **Mohamed Kayse Mohamoud**, an author, was arrested and detained for referring to Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi, as a “local” in his Facebook post, On 16 April, he was charged and found guilty of offending the honor of the president as “the president is a national president”. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison.

Amnesty International is concerned that Mohamed Kayse Mohamoud and Boqor Osman aw Muhamed Mohamed have been convicted solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Please write immediately in Somali or your own language:

- Calling on the Somaliland authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mohamed Kayse Mohamoud and Boqor Osman aw Muhamed Mohamed, as they have been convicted solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that, pending their release, the two men are granted access to both their lawyers and families; and
- Calling on them to amend broad provisions in their penal code, which allows for the harassment of those who express public critiques of the Somaliland government.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JUNE 2018 TO:

Somaliland Chief Justice

Adam Haji

Hargeisa, Somaliland

Email: aadamhaji@gmail.com

Salutation: **Dear Chief Justice**

Somaliland Attorney General

Hassan Ahmed Adan

Hargeisa, Somaliland

Email: hassmo12@yahoo.com

Salutation: **Dear Attorney General**

And copies to:

President of Somaliland

Muse Bihi

Office of the President

Hargeisa, Somaliland

Salutation: **Dear President**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Mission of Somaliland, 234-236 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ, 020 3441 2631, contact@somaliland-mission.com

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned about the apparent clampdown on freedom of expression in Somaliland under President Muse Bihi's administration.

On 27 January, Naema Ahmed Ibrahim, a prominent Somali poet, was arrested at Egal International Airport, Hargeisa while on her way to Mogadishu, Somalia. She was charged with 'anti-national activity of a citizen abroad' and with bringing Somaliland into contempt. She was accused of making statements "against Somaliland's separation from Somalia" and of "calling Somaliland a region" in her Facebook posts, while she was in Mogadishu. Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991, and authorities insist that Somaliland must be referred to as a state, and not a region within a larger state. As such, she was found guilty of the second charge and sentenced to three years in prison on 15 April. She was threatened with rape and beaten while in detention in Gabiley Prison, but she was released on a presidential pardon on 7 May.

On 17 February, Mohamed Aabi Digaale, Hargeisa bureau chief of London based Universal TV, was arrested and detained without charge. The arrest was allegedly in response to a news report criticizing the Somaliland government broadcasted by Universal TV earlier that month. He was released on bail on 27 February.

Name: Mohamed Kayse Mohamoud and Boqor Osman aw Muhamed Mohamed
Gender m/f: m

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