

Somaliland journalists detained, accused of "false news"

New York, USA - Somaliland authorities should immediately release Ahmed Sa'ed and Abdirahman Mohamed Ege, the Committee to Protect Journalists said.



Image credit: scanrail via [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

Police on 18 December arrested the Somali journalists on allegations of publishing false news about the mayor of Berbera, a port city in the semi-autonomous region of Somaliland, according to Guleid Ahmed Jama, chairperson of the advocacy group Human Rights Center, and Yahye Mohamed, the Somaliland Journalists Association executive director.

Their arrests came after Abdirahman and Ahmed ran separate television stories both alleging the mayor, Abdishakur Mahmoud Hassan, misused public property, according to Yahye and Guleid.

"Somaliland authorities must immediately release Ahmed Sa'ed and Abdirahman Mohamed, and permit reporters to operate without fear of arrest," Angela Quintal, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Africa program coordinator, said from Durban, South Africa. "Somaliland's new president, Muse Bihi Abdi, should seize the opportunity to end such blatant attempts to intimidate journalists and make press freedom a priority for his administration."

No response

Berbera Mayor Abdishakur Mahmoud Hassan did not answer a call and text message from CPJ.

Following the journalists' arrest, Berbera authorities brought Ahmed, who works for the privately owned Sa TV, and Abdirahman, who works for the privately owned Eryal TV, to a local court, which remanded them for seven days pending further investigation, Guleid told CPJ.

The detentions of Abdirahman and Ahmed follow the arrest on 5 December of Abdirisak Dayib Alii. His arrest came after CPJ conducted its most recent prison census, which indicated that on December 1 Somalia was jailing one journalist, Mohamed Adan Dirir.

Somaliland's police commissioner, Abdullahi Fadal Iman, did not respond to phone calls and text messages for comment from CPJ.

Reached yesterday, the recently appointed information minister Abdurrahman Abdullahi Farah asked CPJ to contact him today. CPJ was unable to reach the minister today: the phone connection was poor and the spokesperson did not immediately return a text message seeking comment.

Source: *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) via All Africa.*

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