



# SOLJA

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Somaliland Journalists Association



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## Media Case Report January and February 2024

### Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA)

#### Overview

First two months of 2024, Somaliland experienced dramatic increase of arresting journalists with a total of six media professionals taken into custody in various areas/ regions in the country as the media case report illustrates. Alarming many of these arrests lacked transparency as there were no reasons given for the detentions. Overall none of the journalists were presented with arrest warrants and unlawfully detained them.

On January 6 2024 journalists named **Mohamed Abdi Sheikh** ( Ilig) **Mohamed Abdi Abdillahi** (Andar) and **Ilyas Abdinasir** were all apprehended together by the Somaliland National Intelligence Agency while at MM TV studio. While Andar and Ilyas were released three days later after their detention Ilig underwent a process. He appeared before the military court on January 13 2024 which was surprise illegal and shocking to appear before the military court and recorded as the first ever case that a civilian and a journalist was brought into the military court .

After public outcry and successive efforts SOLJA carried out and his case was later transferred to the marodijeh regional court on January 30 and February 10 2024. Finally, on February 18 2024, he was declared not guilty. Regained his freedom although some of the television's equipment was smashed while others taken away by Somaliland national intelligence agency (NIA). SOLJA is still working hard to get the materials back immediately.

Another concerning incident took place on January 14, 2024 when journalist **Abdirashid Abdiwahab Hussein**. A member of SOLJAs board of directors was arrested by the Somaliland National Intelligence Agency without a cause. Luckily he was released on that day. This discloses that journalists are in danger of being detained without proper cause.

Furthermore 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 by the order of the manager and the deputy manager of the fuel storage tanks, **Abdirahman Mohamed Cige** was taken into custody, due to issues linked to the fuel storage. Cige publicly reported that the manager of the fuel tanks diverted funds intended for a boarding schools in Sahil , while collecting the fund under the institution's name. He disclosed that he hired employees for an office in Hargeisa , while receiving payment, they were actively working from Baligubadle and Gorayo Awl for the government.

He also mentioned that his relatives had filled the fuel tanks as employees. Abdirahman stated that he had evidence for his news. Interestingly, on the 5th of February 2024, the manager expressed his desire to let him go in a letter.

During the time journalist **Abdirahman Awil Elmi** was held in custody, in Erigavo he shared details on his media about a farm owned by civilians. Subsequently the Deputy Minister of Agriculture detained him for 8 hours. Following this elders from his family. Recommended him to remove the news, which he promptly did. Interestingly they later took a screenshot of the post. Initiated action against him. It is worth noting that his arrest coincided with his release, on February 4 2024.

These incidents highlight the pressing need to address challenges encountered by journalists and uphold press freedom in Somaliland.