



MEDIA CASES REPORT

JANUARY - JUNE, 2025



Executive summary

The first six months of 2025 have been very troubling for press freedom in Somaliland. During this period, **15 journalists were arrested** in different regions, and **one private media** outlet lost its broadcasting license. These events show a growing pressure on journalists and media houses, with many cases showing lack of transparency, violations of proper legal procedures, and ignoring what the Constitution says about media rights.

Despite early promises of reform and pledges to uphold media freedoms by the current administration, the actual situation on the ground paints a different picture.

Arrests in Burao: Edited Remarks Trigger Detention

On 15 February 2025, three journalists —Sa’ed Ali Osman ‘Xaalays’ (Sky TV), Ayanle Egeh Du’ale (Sahan TV), and Abdiasis Salebaan Sulub (Cawl, KF Media) were detained and held at Burao Central Police Station. The arrest was reportedly ordered by the Governor of Togdheer, allegedly in retaliation for their broadcast of edited footage from one of his public addresses. The move was widely criticized as an overreach of authority, lacking legal grounds and amounting to a suppression of journalistic work.

Repeated Detentions in Sanaag Region

The Sanaag region became a hotspot for repeated journalist detentions throughout the reporting period:

On 7 March, journalist Qaryaan Aadan was detained in Erigavo Prison for three days. His arrest was tied to a report reflecting public sentiment on the nationalization of the armed forces, but no formal charges were brought forward.

Just days later, on 10 March, Journalist Mohamed Saleban Ahmed (Suute), a journalist based in Ceel-Afwayn, was detained for 48 hours in Erigavo over his coverage of a local elder. A second arrest followed on 16 March in El-afweyn, with Suute held for five more days before being released on 20 March. Both arrests were reportedly ordered by regional authorities without court involvement.

On 19 March, journalist Abdiladif Sa’ed Ahmed (Casayr) was arrested and detained for two nights following a report on mineral extraction activities that mentioned the Director General of the Ministry involved. He was detained again on 19 May in Hargeisa, accused by the Director General of the Ministry of Interior of defamation. He remained in custody until 2 June.

On 11 May, Mohamed Abdi Hassan Onkod, a reporter based in Erigavo, was also detained for two nights over his recent reporting on the Jiidali district in Erigavo. The arrest lacked a court warrant, and no charges were filed.

Detention in Hargeisa by Intelligence Forces

On 20 March, Yusuf Abdalle Yusuf, founder of Xog-Ogaal media, was abruptly detained by intelligence officers from a hotel in Hargeisa. He was held for four hours at the intelligence headquarters in connection with a report on the presence of NIA forces in the city. No legal

justification or court order was provided. Upon release, Yusuf was warned not to disclose the circumstances of his detention, underscoring a concerning lack of accountability.

Detention in Gabilay by the Governor

On May 1st journalist **Mohamed Suldaan Osman** was detained in Gabilay. The detention was authorized by the regional governor, who was reportedly displeased with the journalist's coverage of the unrest that occurred in Gabilay, and was released on the next day.

Legal Procedure Followed in Isolated Cases

While most arrests in this reporting period circumvented due process, two notable exceptions stand out:

On 24 May, Abdiqadir Mohmed Hassan was arrested under a court-issued order related to a social media post criticizing the **President of Somaliland**. Unlike other cases, his arrest was carried out lawfully, and court proceedings are ongoing.

Similarly, on 23 June, Abdirasaaq Qaasim of Saab TV was arrested in Berbera following a court order after publishing a report implicating a Member of Parliament in a conflict of interest over a government printing contract. He was transferred to Hargeisa and released on 25 June, following due legal procedures.

Pressure on Journalists Reporting on Health Institutions

On 20 April, journalist Sa'ed Muse Farah (Qurbaawi) faced court proceedings in Erigavo over a report on the local TB Hospital. Notably, some hospital staff featured in the report were also detained and allegedly pressured to retract their statements. Qurbaawi was arrested on 13 June and fined by the court on 14 June, raising concerns over attempts to stifle critical reporting in the health sector.

Unexplained Detention Linked to a Civil Case

Between 1 and 4 June, Warsame Kaafi Abdirashid was held in Erigavo following a civil dispute. Although the initial matter was reportedly resolved, the regional court chairman issued a separate detention order without public explanation. The circumstances surrounding this decision remain unclear.

Revocation of Media License.

On February 12, 2025, the Ministry of Information, Culture and National Guidance of Somaliland formally issued a letter referenced as **WWW/XW/76-10/2010** announcing the revocation of Universal TV's broadcasting license in Hargeisa.

The action has raised serious questions among media stakeholders regarding government tolerance for critical reporting and the broader implications for press freedom in the region.

Former Chairman of SOLJA Departs Somaliland Citing Journalist Intimidation

The alarming increase in the targeting of journalists has led to the departure of SOLJA's former chairman, Mohamud Abdi Jama (Xuuto), a respected journalist and political analyst. He has sought safety abroad in Addis Ababa amid rising pressure and fears of arrest.

According to interviews Mr. Xuuto has given to various media outlets, he made the difficult decision to leave Somaliland after being summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). He claims the summons was tied to his professional work specifically, posts and reports he shared on his Facebook page that addressed national affairs. The lack of clarity around the CID's intentions and the timing of this action has understandably raised alarm within the media space.

ANNEX: Media Case tracking record.

| SN | Name | Arrested on | Released on | Region | Warrant | Court | Court |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Sa'ed Ali Osman (Xaalays) | 25 Feb. | 27 Feb | Burao | No | No | |
| 2 | Ayanle Egeh Du'ale | 25 Feb. | 27 Feb | Burao | No | No | |
| 3 | Abdiasis Saleban Sulub | 25 Feb. | 27 Feb | Burao | No | No | |
| 4 | Journalist Qaryaan Aadan | 07 Mar. | 09 Mar. | Erigavo | No | No | |
| 5 | Mohamed Saleban Ahmed (Suute) | 08 Mar. | 11 Mar. | Erigavo | No | No | |
| 6 | Mohamed Saleban Ahmed (Suute) | 16 Mar. | 20 Mar. | Elafweyn | No | No | |
| 7 | Abdiladif Sa'ed Ahmed | 19 Mar. | 21 Mar. | Erigavo | No | No | |
| 8 | Yusuf Abdalle Yusuf | 20 Mar. | 20 Mar. | Hargeisa | No | No | |
| 9 | Sa'ed Muse Farah (Qurbaawi) | 20 Apr. | 14 Jun. | Erigavo | No | Yes | Yes |
| 10 | Mohamed Abdi Hassan Onkod | 11 May | 13 May | Erigavo | No | No | |
| 11 | Abdiladif Sa'ed Ahmed | 19 May | 02 Jun. | Hargeisa | No | No | |
| 12 | Abdiqadir Mohmed Hassan | 26 May | On going | Hargeisa | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 13 | Warsame Kaafi Abdirashid | 01 Jun. | 4 June | Erigavo | No | No | |
| 14 | Mohamed Suldan Osman | May 01 | May 2 | Gabiley | No | No | |
| 15 | Abdirasaaq Qaasim | 23 Jun. | 25 Jun. | Berbera | Yes | No | |