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## **SMSJ: Somalia’s SWS authorities should stop threats of legal action against Arlaadi Media Network and harassment of its journalists**

**MOGADISHU, Somalia 8 July, 2022** – Somalia’s South West State (SWS) authorities should stop threats and harassment against [Arlaadi Media Network](#) (AMN) and its journalists while we also call the Federal Ministry of Information to reject the South West State Minister of Information’s letter seeking legal actions against AMN, a joint statement by the Somali Mechanism of the Safety of the Journalists (SMSJ) said today.

On 5 July, Arlaadi Media Network (AMN) [reported](#) a statement made by a group of South West State Assembly lawmakers calling for the speaker of the South West State Assembly to resume the function of the regional assembly which they termed as overdue. The lawmakers’ call comes amid increased political activities in South West State ahead of the state presidential election in six months’ time.

On 6 July, the Second Deputy Speaker of the South West State Assembly, Shamso Mohamed Yarow [said she had instructed](#) the regional minister of information to provide more information on AMN resulting the minister of information, Ilyas Ali Nur to subsequently issue another letter on the same day denouncing AMN’s reporting on the South West State Assembly lawmakers. The Minister further instructed the Federal Ministry of Information to initiate a legal action against AMN which is headquartered in Mogadishu.

The Somali Mechanism of the Safety of the Journalists (SMSJ) is also concerned about the ongoing threats by the South West State Minister of Information, Ilyas Ali Nur, a Somali-British citizen against AMN journalists in Baidoa. According to AMN editors, the only two reporters working for AMN quit reporting in March this year due to the growing threats by minister Nur. Since its establishment in October 2021, AMN, which is based in Mogadishu but broadcasts in the Maay Dialect, has been under intense pressure by the South West State authorities making dreadful for its journalists to report from the region they predominantly cover.

SMSJ member organizations stand in solidarity with AMN and its journalists as they face incessant threats and pressure due to their reporting on the South West State

authorities. Authorities in South West State are known to impede freedom of the press through [arbitrary detention](#) of journalists and threats on the media houses that report critically on them.

SMSJ strongly condemns the restrictions and threats by the Speaker of the South West State Assembly, Shamso Mohamed Yarow and its information minister, Ilyas Ali Nur against AMN and its journalists. We call for these officials – particularly minister Ilyas Ali Nur – to cease their instructions seeking punishment against AMN and allow AMN journalists to resume their reporting in South West State.

SMSJ also calls for the Federal Ministry of Information to abide by the Somali Federal Constitution and the international frameworks that guarantee freedom of the press and the right to free expression and therefore, reject the South West State Minister of Information's letter seeking actions against AMN.

***Signed by:***

1. Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS)
2. Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOJ)
3. Somali Media Association (SOMA)
4. Media Women Network (MWN)
5. Somali Women Journalists Organization (SWJO)

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