



Journalist detained at ATMIS camp in Burhakaba, his equipment confiscated

MOGADISHU, Somalia 06 October 2022 – Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS), Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOJ), Somali Media Association (SOMA) and the Somalia Mechanism of the Safety of Journalists (SMSJ) jointly condemn the detention of Arlaadi Media Network (AMN) journalist, Yusuf Mohamed Adam, who was held at a military camp by the Ethiopian contingent under the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) in Burhakaba town, Bay region, on 3 October 2022.

According to the journalist and Arlaadi Media Network's director, Yusuf was detained by South West State security forces on Monday a day after [he wrote](#) on his Facebook page that the Ethiopian forces were occupying the only community-owned water well in Burhakaba while many of the locals were suffering due to lack of water as a result of the severe drought has affected people and animals in the region. Yusuf was detained near his home in Burhakaba and was held at a narrow tent with no ventilation at the ATMIS camp where he was blindfolded and handcuffed by the Ethiopian soldiers at the camp. While in the detention, the Ethiopian forces, through their translator, interrogated Yusuf's journalism work and his post on the ATMIS forces.

Former Burhakaba district commissioner, Mohamed Ibrahim Nur, also confirmed that the South West State security forces in Burhakaba led by their commander Fatir Ibrahim initially detained the journalist on Monday morning before handing over to the Ethiopian contingent of ATMIS in Burhakaba, about 164 kilometers (102 miles) south of Mogadishu. Arlaadi Media Director, Ahmed Ali Nur said despite their reporter was freed without charge on the same day, however his equipment is still held by the Ethiopian-ATMIS forces.

Through our general secretariat, we contacted ATMIS officials in Baidoa and Mogadishu but did not receive any response from ATMIS.

SJS, FESOJ, SOMA and the Somalia Mechanism of the Safety of Journalists (SMSJ) strongly condemn the use of ATMIS camp as a detention cell for the journalist and the intimidation through interrogation, handcuffing and blindfolding the journalist. While thousands of residents in Burhakaba and nearby rural areas, including internally displaced families, are fighting for their survival due to the looming famine, Ethiopian ATMIS forces were illegally occupying the only available water well and when the only journalist on the ground exposed that, he was detained, interrogated, threatened and his equipment confiscated. We call ATMIS officials to investigate this incident and take necessary actions against their Ethiopian officers who detained, blindfolded and

handcuffed journalist Yusuf Mohamed Adam. They should also immediately and unconditionally return all the journalists' equipment they had confiscated.

“The mandate of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) does not include detaining journalists or using intimidation to stop critical reporting. We condemn the detention against Arlaadi Media Network (AMN) journalist, Yusuf Mohamed Adam in Burhakaba by the South West State Security forces who then handed over to the ATMIS Ethiopian soldiers,” SJS Secretary-General, Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, who is also the Secretary-General of the Somalia Mechanism of the Safety of Journalists (SMSJ) said. “The soldiers who detained Yusuf should be investigated and his equipment returned immediately.”

“We strongly condemn the actions of ATMIS Ethiopian soldiers in Burhakaba who blindfolded, handcuffed journalist Yusuf Mohamed Adam. We call for ATMIS to respect the freedom of expression and human rights and refrain from involvement in the attacks against journalists including the illegal detention and threats meant to silence independent journalists' reporting,” FESOJ Secretary-General, Farah Omar Nur, who is also the Chair of the Somalia Mechanism of the Safety of Journalists (SMSJ) said.

“It is unfortunate that the only journalist in Burhakaba is now facing fear after being arrested and threatened by ATMIS Ethiopian forces. We demand that this incident be investigated and those responsible - especially the ATMIS soldiers, be brought to justice,” SOMA Secretary-General, Mohamed Osman Makaran said.

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