

President Muse Bihi Abdi
Somaliland Presidential Palace
Hargeisa
Somaliland

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern about two Christians in Somaliland who have been arrested and detained on charges for spreading Christianity. Please allow me to bring to your attention the family of Mohamed and Hamdi, and their four-month-old child. They were taken from their house on January 21, where they kept Christian material (which was later confiscated from their home) and brought into detention.

These two were charged with the spreading and teaching of Christianity, as well as with disrupting the Islamic religious activities of Somaliland, inciting others to disobey laws relating to public order. The couple are now separated from one another – Mohamed resides at the Criminal Investigation Department while Hamdi finds herself in a police station together with their baby.

This year, many other Christians have been arrested and charged for apostasy and spreading Christianity. Mohamed and Hamdi are not the only exceptions, however, it is the second time in six months that groups of Christians have been charged with offences related to crimes against Islamic religion.

Your Excellency, I understand that Somaliland is a nation that seeks greater recognition. Committing to protect fundamental human rights, including people's right to freedom of religion and belief, and treating minorities and vulnerable groups with equity and grace will only increase the respect for your country. The same applies to acting in conformity with international law and respecting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as enshrines in the Constitution of Somaliland art. 10.

I, therefore, humbly petition your intervention to ensure that:

- Mohamed, Hamdi and their child are released from detention and reunited immediately; and
- The Somaliland authorities will respectfully protect the Christians in the country by honouring the basic human rights which includes the right to freedom of religion and belief.

Sincerely,