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## **Islamic militants destroy underground Christian Library in Somalia**

ICC (20.12.2010) / HRWF (21.12.2010) - [www.hrwf.net](http://www.hrwf.net) - International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that on December 16, members of Al-Shabaab, an Islamic militant group, destroyed a Christian library in the Luuq district of Somalia.

The militants destroyed the library and brought Bibles, Christian books, and audio/video materials to the city center and burned them after the Muslim noon prayer. The guardian of the library fled the area hours after the library was found by the Islamists. His whereabouts are unknown.

Al-Shabaab's district commissioner in Luuq, Sheik Farhaan Abdi Elmoghe, described the discovery of the library as "a blow to the misguided Somali Christians."

The library was located in a derelict farm on the Juba River. It is not uncommon for the persecuted Somali Christians to literally bury their Bibles and other Christian materials because of intense persecution from Islamists.

Speaking from Mogadishu to ICC, a leader of an underground church said, "The library served as an underground Somali Bible college, [and it's] one of the biggest and the most comprehensive Somali Christian libraries in southern Somalia." He further added that the destruction of the library would not stop the Somali Christians from studying the scriptures.

Al-Shabaab has openly declared that it wants to wipe out Christianity from Somalia. This year alone, the Islamists have killed at least half a dozen Somali Christians. Despite the attacks by Islamists, the number of Somali Muslims converting to Christianity has grown in the past 15 years.

ICC's Regional Manager for Africa, Jonathan Racho, said, "Christians in Somalia are paying the ultimate price for their faith in Jesus Christ. It's high time for the churches throughout the world to stand with the underground churches of Somalia. Unfortunately, the world has ignored the atrocities that Al-Shabaab has been committing against innocents in Somalia."

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## **Somali teenage girl shot to death for embracing Christ**

***Nurta Mohamed Farah, 17, had fled parents who tortured her***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct (03.12.2010) – HRWF (06.12.2010) [www.hrwf.net](http://www.hrwf.net) - A 17-year-old girl in Somalia who converted to Christianity from Islam was shot to death last week in an apparent “honor killing,” area sources said.

Nurta Mohamed Farah, who had fled her village of Bardher, Gedo Region to Galgadud Region to live with relatives after her parents tortured her for leaving Islam, died on Nov. 25. Area sources said they strongly suspected that the two unidentified men in Galgadud Region who shot her in the chest and head with a pistol were relatives or acting on their behest.

“Reports reached the relatives in Galgadud that Nurta Farah had converted to Christianity,” one source said. “The suspicion that the family is responsible is a solid one. The sister was killed in Abudwaq, a district in Galgadud Region, and the place where the incident took place is about 200 meters from where the sister was staying with relatives.” Relatives buried Farah, sources said. Her parents had severely beaten her for leaving Islam and regularly shackled her to a tree at their home, Christian sources said. She had been confined to her home in Gedo region in southern Somalia since May 10, when her family found out that she had embraced Christianity, said a Christian leader who visited the area (see [www.compassdirect.org](http://www.compassdirect.org), “Family of 17-Year-Old Somali Girl Abuses Her for Leaving Islam,” June 15).

Her parents also took her to a doctor who prescribed medication for a “mental illness,” he said. Alarmed by her determination to keep her faith, her father, Hassan Kafi Ilmi, and mother, Hawo Godane Haf, decided she had gone crazy and forced her to take the prescribed medication, but it had no effect in swaying her from her faith, the source said. Traditionally, he added, many Somalis believe the Quran cures the sick, especially the mentally ill, so the Islamic scripture was recited to her twice a week.

She had declined her family’s offer of forgiveness in exchange for renouncing Christianity, the source said. The confinement began after the medication and punishments failed.

Area Christians had reported that Farah was shackled to a tree by day and put in a small, dark room at night.

Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government generally did not enforce protection of religious freedom found in the Transitional Federal Charter, according to the U.S. Department of State’s 2010 International Religious Freedom Report.

“Non-Muslims who practiced their religion openly faced occasional societal harassment,” the report stated. “Conversion from Islam to another religion was considered socially unacceptable. Those suspected of conversion faced harassment or even death from members of their community.”

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## **Somali family laments kidnapping of Christian girl**

***Islamic extremist insurgents abducted 15-year-old nearly eight months ago***

By Shahid Mohammed

Compass Direct (06.10.2010) / HRWF Int. (06.10.2010) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net>  
– An underground Christian family from central Somalia is agonizing over the kidnapping

of their daughter nearly eight months ago by Islamic militants bent on punishing those who leave Islam.

Ghelle Hassan Aded told Compass that he has not seen his 15-year-old daughter, Anab Ghelle Hassan, since Islamic extremists from the al Shabaab ("the Youth") insurgency kidnapped her on Feb. 15. Certain that the militants would come after the rest of the family, they immediately fled, said Aded, who spoke with Compass from an undisclosed location in Somalia's autonomous region of Puntland.

The family formed part of a growing movement of underground Christians in Dhusa Mareb, capital of Galgaduud Region in central Somalia, said other sources in Somalia who confirmed the kidnapping. Aded and his family had become Christians in 2001 while living in Kampala, Uganda. In 2008, the family returned to Somalia and settled in Dhusa Mareb, where their tribesmen live.

The al Shabaab insurgents fighting the Transitional Federal Government soon began monitoring the family's activities. Aded said they took note that the family did not attend mosque, and on several occasions the insurgents or other Muslims questioned him. In Somalia, Christians hold small meetings in secret and are advised not to keep Bibles or other Christian literature at their homes; they often have to keep them buried in a hole.

On Feb. 15, Aded and his wife sent young Hassan to the market to buy food, he said; relatives told them later that day that they saw al Shabaab insurgents kidnap her at 10 a.m. as she was going about her business at the local market. Knowing that the insurgents would soon come after the rest of his family, Aded said, he fled immediately with his wife, 11-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son to Puntland.

At their location in Puntland, the family appeared devastated by the kidnapping, with Aded's wife often weeping over the loss, but they said they maintain hope of seeing Anab again.

"We are increasingly afraid of being discovered by the militants on our trail and wish to go back to Kampala as soon as possible," Aded said. "After months of monitoring, the militants were convinced that we were practicing Christianity, contrary to their banning of all other religions in Somalia."

Al Shabaab insurgents control much of southern and central Somalia and have embarked on a campaign to rid the country of its hidden Christian population. With estimates of al Shabaab's size ranging from 3,000 to 7,000, the insurgents seek to impose a strict version of sharia (Islamic law).

Al Shabaab was among several splinter groups that emerged after Ethiopian forces removed the Islamic Courts Union, a group of sharia courts, from power in Somalia in 2006. Said to have ties with al Qaeda, al Shabaab has been designated a terrorist organization by several western governments.

The transitional government in Mogadishu fighting to retain control of the country treats Christians little better than the al Shabaab insurgents do. While proclaiming himself a moderate, President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has embraced a version of sharia that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

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## **Family of 17-year-old Somali girl abuses her for leaving Islam**

***Young Christian beaten, shackled to tree***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct (15.06.2010) / HRWF Int. (16.06.2010) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net>  
– The Muslim parents of a 17-year-old Somali girl who converted to Christianity severely beat her for leaving Islam and have regularly shackled her to a tree at their home for more than a month, Christian sources said.

Nurta Mohamed Farah of Bardher, Gedo Region in southern Somalia, has been confined to her home since May 10, when her family found out that she had embraced Christianity, said a Christian leader who visited the area.

“When the woman’s family found out that she converted to Christianity, she was beaten badly but insisted on her new-found religion,” said the source on condition of anonymity.

Her parents also took her to a doctor who prescribed medication for a “mental illness,” he said. Alarmed by her determination to keep her faith, her father, Hassan Kafi Ilmi, and mother, Hawo Godane Haf, decided she had gone crazy and forced her to take the prescribed medication, but it had no effect in swaying her from her faith, the source said.

Traditionally, he added, many Somalis believe the Quran cures the sick, especially the mentally ill, so the Islamic scripture is continually recited to her twice a week.

“The girl is very sick and undergoing intense suffering,” he said.

Her suffering began after she declined her family’s offer of forgiveness in exchange for renouncing Christianity, the source said. The confinement began after the medication and punishments failed.

The tiny, shaken Christian community in Gedo Region reports that the girl is shackled to a tree by day and is put in a small, dark room at night, he said.

“There is little the community can do about her condition, which is very bad, but I have advised our community leader to keep monitoring her condition but not to meddle for their own safety,” the source told Compass. “We need prayers and human advocacy for such inhuman acts, and for freedom of religion for the Somali people.”

Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government generally did not enforce protection of religious freedom found in the Transitional Federal Charter, according to the U.S. Department of State’s 2009 International Religious Freedom Report.

“Non-Muslims who practiced their religion openly faced occasional societal harassment,” the report stated. “Conversion from Islam to another religion was considered socially unacceptable. Those suspected of conversion faced harassment or even death from members of their community.”

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## **Al Shabaab militants execute Christian leader in Somalia**

***Islamic extremists run into 57-year-old Yusuf Ali Nur after battle with rival group***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct (05.05.2010) / HRWF Int. (06.05.2010) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net>  
- Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) – Islamic militants yesterday killed another leader of the underground church movement in Somalia, sources said.

Before he was fatally shot on Tuesday (May 4) in Xarardheere, about 60 kilometers (37 miles) from Jowhar, 57-year-old Yusuf Ali Nur had been on a list of people the Islamic extremist al Shabaab suspected of being Christian, sources who spoke on condition of anonymity told Compass. Al Shabaab, said to have links with al Qaeda, has vowed to rid Somalia of Christianity.

The militants fighting the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu had been engaged in a two-hour battle with a rival rebel group, the Ahlu Sunna Waljamer, which had taken control of the Xarardheere area, before they came across Nur. Nur had lived in Xarardheere since leaving Jowhar in July 2009.

Eyewitnesses said that after al Shabaab took control of the area, they went from house to house looking for enemy fighters when they arrived at Nur's rented home at about 10:30 a.m. Sources said that upon finding Nur, one of the militants remarked, "Oh! This is Yusuf, whom we have been looking for," before they sprayed him with bullets at close range.

Nur is survived by his wife, whose name was withheld for security reasons, and three children, ages 11, 9 and 7.

This latest death comes after several execution-style murders of Somalis suspected of being members of a suppressed yet resilient underground faith movement in Somalia. A number of Christians have been beheaded by the radical Islamists out to topple the fledgling TFG and introduce a strict version of sharia (Islamic law).

Al Shabaab, which controls large parts of central Somalia, recently banned radio stations from playing music and outlawed bell ringing that signals the end of school classes "because they sound like church bells."

Nur, who had worked on a farm while in Jowhar, had long been monitored by al Shabaab, the sources said. After settling in Xarardheere, he became the head teacher of Ganane Primary School and also taught English. The al Shabaab militants object to the use of English, preferring Arabic, and even after relocating to Xarardheere Nur realized he was in danger of the militants finding him, sources said.

Ganane is a private school owned by wealthy Somali proprietors.

In 2009 Islamic militants in Somalia sought out and killed at least 15 Christians, including women and children. This year, on Jan. 1 al Shabaab members murdered 41-year-old Mohammed Ahmed Ali after the Christian had left his home in Hodan, on the outskirts of Mogadishu.

On March 15, al Shabaab rebels shot Madobe Abdi to death on March 15 at 9:30 a.m. in Mahaday village, 50 kilometers (31 miles) north of Jowhar. Abdi's death was distinctive in that he was not a convert from Islam. An orphan, Abdi was raised as a Christian

Advocacy group International Christian Concern has reported that three members of al Shabaab killed Somali Christian Mu'awiye Hilowle Ali in front of his home in Afgoye on March 23, executing him with close-range shots to his head and chest.

The transitional government in Mogadishu fighting to retain control of the country treats Christians little better than the al Shabaab extremists do. While proclaiming himself a moderate, President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has embraced a version of sharia that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

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## **Islamic militants in Somalia murder Christian leader**

### ***Al Shabaab extremists threaten widow of slain pastor of underground church***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct (26.01.2010) / HRWF Int. (27.01.2010) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) - Islamic extremists shot the leader of an underground church to death outside the capital city of Somalia this month and have threatened to kill his wife, his tearful widow told Compass.

Having learned that he had left Islam to become a Christian, Somali militants from the Islamic extremist al Shabaab murdered 41-year-old Mohammed Ahmed Ali at about noon on Jan. 1, Amina Ibrahim Hassan said.

He was killed sometime after leaving his home in Hodan, on the outskirts of Mogadishu, she said. She and other family members were not immediately aware that he had been killed.

"We waited for him that day, but he did not turn up," said Hassan, who has since fled to Nairobi. "The following day, on Jan. 2, I was informed by the fellowship that my husband had been killed."

Ali led an underground church. Christian sources said members of al Shabaab, said to have links with al Qaeda terrorists, had been monitoring Ali and his wife for indications that they had left Islam.

Ali had organized New Year's Day festivities for Christians to take place in Medina, about 15 kilometers (nine miles) outside of Mogadishu. Al Shabaab extremists killed him after word of the planned party leaked to them, Hassan said.

Hassan, who worked for a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) before leaving the country, said she received threatening calls from members of al Shabaab on Jan. 3.

"We know who you are working for," Hassan said one extremist told her. "We also know your home and that you are a follower of the Christians, and we are going to kill you the way we killed your husband."

Aware of the Islamic extremist militia's determination to carry out their threats, Hassan called a relative in Nairobi and informed him of the death of her husband and her intention to flee to Nairobi.

She set out for Kenya early the next morning by bus with her only child, 2-year-old son Abdi Asis Mohammed Ahmed. They reached Ifo, one of the Dadaab refugee camps on the Kenya side of the border, on Jan. 11. She stayed there for a few days before continuing on, arriving at Nairobi on Jan. 20.

"I am thankful that I was able to reach Kenya safely having lost everything - my husband and property," Hassan said.

Al Shabaab extremists have been monitoring Somalis who work with NGOs for signs that they have embraced Christianity, Christian sources said.

Ali came to faith in Christ under the influence of his late uncle, Ali Mohammed Nur, who died in 2000 at the age of 70. Ali, who had worked as a taxi driver, completed secondary education and converted to Christianity the same year his uncle died in 2000. He was baptized in 2005.

Hassan said she converted to Christianity in 2005, was baptized in 2006 and married Ali in 2007. She worked for various NGOs in Somalia before fleeing the war-torn country.

In 2009 Islamic militants in Somalia sought out at least 15 Christians, including women and children, and killed them for their faith in a campaign to rid the country of all non-Muslims. On Nov. 14, Islamic extremists controlling part of Mogadishu executed a 23-year-old Christian they accused of trying to convert a 15-year-old Muslim to Christianity, according to Christian sources. Members of al Shabaab had taken Mumin Abdikarim Yusuf into custody on Oct. 28 after the 15-year-old boy reported him to the militants.

Before Yusuf was executed by two gunshots to the head, reports filtered in that he had been badly beaten and his fingers broken as the Islamists tried to extract incriminating evidence against him and information about other Christians. A source later learned that Yusuf's body showed signs of torture; his front teeth were gone, and some of his fingers were broken, the source said.

On Oct. 19 in Galkayo, in Somalia's autonomous Puntland region, three masked members of another militant Islamist group in Somalia killed a Somali woman who declined to wear a veil as prescribed by Muslim custom. Sources said members of the comparatively "moderate" Suna Waljameca group killed Amina Muse Ali, 45, in her home; she had said members of the group had long monitored her movements because they suspected she was a Christian.

Suna Waljameca is considered "moderate" in comparison with al Shabaab, which it has fought for control over areas of Somalia; it is one of several Islamic groups in the country championing adoption of a strict interpretation of sharia (Islamic law). Along with al Shabaab, another group vying for power is the Hisbul Islam political party.

Somali Christians are in danger from both extremist groups and Somali law. While proclaiming himself a moderate, President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has embraced a version of sharia that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

On Sept. 28, a leader of Islamic extremist al Shabaab militia in Lower Juba identified only as Sheikh Arbow shot to death 46-year-old Mariam Muhina Hussein in Marerey village after discovering she had six Bibles, according to Christian sources. On Sept. 15, al Shabaab militants shot 69-year-old Omar Khalafe at a checkpoint they controlled 10 kilometers (six miles) from Merca after discovering that he was transporting Bibles, sources said.

On Aug. 18 al Shabaab extremists shot and killed 41-year-old Ahmed Matan in Bulahawa, near the Somali border with Kenya, according to Christian sources. In Mahadday Weyne, 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of Mogadishu, al Shabaab Islamists on July 20 shot to death another convert from Islam, Mohammed Sheikh Abdiraman, sources said. On Feb. 21 al Shabaab militants beheaded two young boys in Somalia because their Christian father refused to divulge information about a church leader.

The extremists also reportedly beheaded seven Christians on July 10; Reuters reported that they were killed in Baidoa for being Christians and "spies."

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