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## **Somali Muslims in Kenya attack another Christian**

### ***Islamist gang intercepts brother of 'convert,' beats him unconscious***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct News (13.12.2011) / HRWF (14.12.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> – Young Muslim men of Somali descent beat a 23-year-old Somali Christian unconscious last week in Kenya, less than six weeks after a related gang attacked his older brother.

Ibrahim, 23, whose surname is withheld for security reasons, was beaten by seven Somalis born in Kenya who stopped him near his home in an undisclosed town at about 8:30 p.m. on Dec. 5, he told Compass. His family was presumably Muslim when he was born, so the gang beat him as an "apostate" even though he later had been raised as a Christian, his family said.

He had gone out to buy food for the family, but heavy rains delayed his return. When Ibrahim refused to heed their orders to stop, they began to rough him up, and he heard one of the assailants say, "This is one of the guys we have been looking for, and today we have found him – we did not succeed in killing your brother, but today we are going to kill you."

The young men began hitting him from every side, he said.

"A blunt object hit my knee, and immediately I fell down," he said. "There were several blows that injured my left eye. While on the ground the gang continued hitting me on my head as well as my leg. From that time on I did not know what happened next. I only remember shouting and crying for help. Later I found myself at our house with the rest of the family members."

Area residents were able to stop the beating and took him home, he later learned.

When Compass met with him two days after the attack, a knee injury on one leg and bruises and swelling on the other kept him from walking. His left eye looked red, and he said he could not see well.

"I feel dizzy, and my memory has been affected," he said. "I cannot turn my head; the pain all over my body is numbing."

On Oct. 27 a related gang attacked Ibrahim's brother, 25-year-old Hassan, as they had learned that the entire family had become Christian. Police arrested two of the attackers, but they were released without charges after allegedly accepting a bribe of 10,000 Kenyan shillings (US\$110), according to the young men's mother.

The Christian woman, whose name is withheld for security reasons, said police reported that the two suspects escaped from custody.

"We have information that the two who are alleged to have escaped from prison are in Nyeri," a town in central Kenya near Mt. Kenya about 150 kilometers (93 miles) from Nairobi, she said.

The Somali neighbors in Kenya who had attacked Hassan left him for dead, bleeding and naked, Like his younger brother, Hassan had been returning home from running errands when six young Muslim men hit him with a metal bar on his forehead and face, he said; he lost two teeth. They also wounded his hands with a knife. The attackers stripped him of his clothes as he bled and dragged him away, dumping him at the entrance of an area Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

The young men's mother, saddened and shaken, said she was reluctant to report the latest assault after the release of the two men arrested in connection with the attack on her oldest son.

"I feel it will be a waste of time, because those who attacked Hassan were released without being charged in court," she said.

The latest incident comes in the wake of similar attacks on Somalis who have embraced Christ and have fled radical Islamists who do not hesitate to execute those who abandon the Islamic religion.

Ibrahim said he was able to identify two of the Muslims who beat him, Kenya-born Somali neighbors known as Abdi Kodana and Mohammed Kodana. The leader of the gang, he said, was Omar Kadi, also a Kenya-born Somali.

The young men's mother said she is seeking a safer place to move the family. The sole breadwinner for the family, she fled Somalia 10 years ago after the death of her husband. She has five other sons and two daughters.

The widow and her family are part of a church that meets secretly in a home, but neighborhood Muslims have gradually surmised that they are Christians as they do not attend a mosque.

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## **Attack on church compound in Kenya kills two, wounds three**

### ***Children among the dead, injured in grenade blast at church guard's house***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct News (07.11.2011) / HRWF (08.11.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> - Suspected Islamic extremists with Somalia's al Shabaab militia threw a grenade into the home of the church guard of an East Africa Pentecostal Church (EAPC) congregation outside Garissa, Kenya on Saturday night (Nov. 5), killing an 8-year-old girl and another member of the church, sources said.

Three other people were seriously injured in the 8 p.m. grenade attack on the house, which is near the gate of the church compound.

Killed instantly were 8-year-old Winnie Mwenda Mutinda and 25-year-old church member John Kikavu. The child was the youngest daughter of church elder Patrick Mutinda, who also serves as the guard or watchman of the church building, sources said.

The other three people in the house at the time of the blast were seriously wounded. The watchman's son, Samuel Mutinda, 12, suffered burns on his chest and leg, and his 10-year-old brother, Peter Mutinda, sustained burns on his hand and leg; the injuries of both boys required doctors to remove portions of skin. Burns on their grandmother, Rachael Kandu, also required the removal of skin from her leg, sources said.

The three wounded family members were first taken to the house of the church pastor within the compound before they were rushed to Garissa Provincial Hospital.

"The three injured Christians are in stable condition in the hospital undergoing treatment," the pastor told Compass. "I hope they will be discharged soon."

Al Shabaab activity near the Somali-Kenya border, including Garissa in northeast Kenya, has increased since Kenya began air strikes on al Shabaab-held territory in southern Somalia last month in retaliation for the rebel group's kidnapping and murder of foreigners in Kenya. Even before Kenya's military action, however, the Islamic extremist militia battling Somalia's transitional government had threatened and attacked Christians in northeastern Kenya.

The church pastor, the Rev. Ibrahim Makunyi Kamwaro, told Compass he was witness to the explosion.

"I saw big blast coming out of the house, and immediately I rushed to the scene of the incident, and I heard the attackers saying, 'You will have to stop taking of wine,' as they fled away," he said.

Islam forbids consumption of alcohol, but Makunyi Kamwaro said he was not sure what the comment meant.

"I think the church participation in the Holy Communion might have been taken to mean the church members taking wine," he said. "This statement is quite unclear to me."

Also on Saturday (Nov. 5), in the morning hours a bomb in Garissa near the Heller gas station and close to an electrical transformer was removed before it exploded. Police who received reports of white sparks at the site were able to remove and defuse the bomb.

Pastor Makunyi Kamwaro told Compass that, in spite of the al Shabaab activity in the area, he was not sure who was responsible for the deadly blast.

"At the moment we cannot say exactly who the attackers are, but what we know is that they are the enemies of the church," he said.

Another area pastor said a fellowship of church leaders met on Thursday (Nov. 3) and wrote a letter to authorities requesting police security for churches in Garissa, especially on Saturdays and Sundays.

The pastor said that he received a threatening message yesterday on his cell phone, reading, "Message from al Shabaab – You must migrate [from] Garissa town within 48 hours or you see bomb blast taking your life and we know your house, Christians will see war. Don't take it so lightly. We are for your neck."

In Garissa, police today also found three bombs before they could be detonated: one on a mini-bus, one near a gas station and one at a new house under construction.

In the attack on Saturday, in which one grenade missed its target before a second one hit, the parents of the children were not home; Patrick Mutinda was still in Garissa, about

1 kilometer from the EAPC building. His wife, known as "Mama Grace," was helping the church pastor's wife.

EAPC Pastor Makunyi Kamwaro told Compass that the church's worship service will continue as usual this Sunday.

"Many of the church members have been with us here in the church building since the incident took place 10 hours ago," he said yesterday, before Compass arrived at the scene today. "As I talk to you now over the phone, there are many people around or within the church compound: the church members, the police and people from the press. Thank you for keeping in touch with us and comforting us at this trying moment."

Garissa is the provincial headquarters of Kenya's North Eastern Province, which is predominantly Muslim.

Muslims restrict churches in Garissa in various ways. Christians are not allowed to conduct prayers, sing or use musical instruments in rented homes owned by Muslims. No teaching of Christian Religious Education in schools is allowed; only Islamic Religious Knowledge is taught.

Garissa has more than 15 Christian denominations, the main ones being the EAPC, the Redeemed Gospel Church, the Anglican Church, the Deliverance Church, the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, the Africa Inland Church and the African Christian Churches and schools.

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## **Somali Muslims cut, beat Christian unconscious in Kenya**

***Assuming he is a convert from Islam, victim's countrymen leave him for dead***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct News (04.11.2011)/ HRWF (07.11.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> - A Somali Christian in Kenya is nursing injuries after young Muslim men from his country beat him with iron rods and wooden clubs last week, leaving him unconscious at a church entryway.

Hassan, a 25-year-old refugee from Somalia whose surname is withheld for security reasons, had hardly been raised as a Muslim, having received Christ at age 7. But the Somali neighbors in Kenya who attacked him left him for dead on Oct. 27, bleeding and naked, on the assumption that as a Somali he was born into Islam and was therefore an apostate deserving of death, the young man told Compass.

He and his mother, a convert from Islam who fled war in Somalia 10 years ago after the death of her husband, are part of an underground house church.

In a town in Kenya undisclosed for security reasons, Hassan was returning home from running errands at 8:30 p.m. when the six young Muslim men stopped him. They hit him with a metal bar on his forehead and face, he said, and he lost two teeth on the spot. Others hit him on the back.

Some stomped on his stomach while he was on the ground as others hit him on his legs, he said through bandages on his nose and above his mouth. His hands were bandaged where they wounded him with a knife.

The attackers stripped him of his clothes as he bled and dragged him away, dumping him at the entrance of an area Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Some passersby found him and called his mother, whose name is withheld for security reasons.

"When I reached the scene of the attack, my son was lying in a pool of blood," she told Compass. "I wailed and did not know what happened to me. I only gained consciousness after sometime, when so many people, including the police, had arrived at the scene. The attackers had covered my son all over with dirt."

He was rushed to a hospital, where he received a blood transfusion. When Compass met with him and his mother on Oct. 31, he still had several bandages on his face, his head cloaked in a wrap of grey fabric.

"Since the time my son was attacked, we have been spending sleepless nights due to the pain that he has been going through," his mother said. "He risks losing a third tooth, which is adding more pain for him. He also complains of abdominal pains; possibly he might have hurt some of his internal organs. But we are helpless; we have no money for specialized medication for him."

Police have arrested two of the assailants. The other four Muslims are still on the run, and Hassan and his mother said they fear justice will not be done due to area hatred for converts from Islam.

"I know the community does not like us because of our Christian faith, but we have done nothing bad," Hassan said.

His mother, who has six sons younger than Hassan and two daughters, noted that the area police commissioner is a Muslim in a Muslim-majority area. The arrest of two assailants is a hopeful sign that at the same time creates fear that area Muslims will make retaliatory strikes, she said.

"We need to relocate," she said. "The other sons are traumatized, especially now that two of the attackers are in police custody."

Neighborhood Muslims gradually surmised that the widow was a convert to Christianity; when Muslim women passed by her home every Friday inviting her to go to the mosque with them, she would always tell them she wasn't feeling well, she said.

"What happened to my son is the climax of the threats that I have been receiving from my Muslim neighbors," she said. "They have now discovered that we are Christians. They have heard my small children sing Christian songs. In fact, there are rumors going round that I am the pastor of the group, but my strength is from God and my seven sons."

She and Hassan speculated that the Somali Muslim neighbors attacked him because "the oldest son is the strength of the mother."

Her faith, she said, remains strong.

"Even though he has been beaten, I trust God to protect us," she said. "I will not return to Islam; I will stand with Christ."

For his part, Hassan said that even when they were beating him, he was praying.

"In spite of what happened, I don't feel I'm losing my Christian faith," he said. "I still need to fight for the Christian faith, in spite of what I'm feeling now."

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