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## **Somali convert from Islam whipped in public**

### ***Woman left bleeding in front of hundreds of spectators for becoming Christian***

*By Simba Tian*

Compass Direct News (10.01.12) / HRWF (18.01.12) – A Somali convert from Islam was paraded before a cheering crowd last month and publicly flogged as a punishment for embracing a “foreign religion,” sources said.

Sofia Osman, a 28-year-old Christian from Janale city in Somali’s Lower Shabelle region, had been taken into custody by Islamic extremist al Shabaab militants in November; the public whipping was meant to mark her release. She received 40 lashes on Dec. 22 while jeered by spectators.

“Osman was whipped 40 lashes at 3 p.m., but she didn’t tell what other humiliations she had suffered while in the hands of the militants,” an eyewitness, told Compass, adding that whipping left her bleeding. “I saw her faint. I thought she had died, but soon she regained consciousness and her family took her away.”

The whipping was administered in front of hundreds of spectators after Osman was released from her month-long custody in al Shabaab camps. Nursing her injuries at her family’s home, in the days after the punishment she would not talk to anyone and looked dazed, a source close in touch with the family said. She has since been relocated.

“Please pray for her quick recovery,” the source said.

Janale, one Somalia’s major cities, is about 200 kilometers (124 miles) from Mogadishu.

Osman became a Christian four years ago and was a member of the underground church in the war-torn Horn of Africa country largely controlled by the al Qaeda-linked militants from al Shabaab.

The al Shabaab militia is being hunted down by Kenya Defense Forces in southern Somalia following the extremists’ incursions into Kenya. They had killed and kidnapped tourists and aid workers inside Kenya, prompting military forces to formally enter into war to secure its borders.

In response, the al Shabaab militants have targeted churches in northern Kenyan towns such as Garissa in the hope of dividing Kenyans along religious lines. The Kenyan public, however, is largely backed the government decision to pursue the militants deep into Somalia.

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## **Somali Christians find danger follows them to Kenya**

### ***Hostility toward converts from Islam shadows refugees to neighboring country***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct News (17.11.2011) / HRWF (22.11.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> – One Christian left his native Somalia 10 years ago and another fled as Muslim extremists were bombing his house earlier this year, but both Somali converts from Islam feel they are still in danger in Kenya.

In February, Islamic extremists from the al Shabaab militia fighting for control of Somalia reduced Mohammed Abdi Mose's house in Mogadishu to ashes as he evacuated his family, the 54-year-old father of seven told Compass. His head bears a scar where shrapnel struck, and he requires medicine to limit the injury's damage to his memory.

"It was midnight, and it was raining," he said. "No moonlight; no light; I said, 'We are moving.' Amid the bullets and mortar shells, I had four kids on me, and my wife had three kids on her, with the older boy and girl walking – the smaller ones were on us."

About 150 people died that night in military fighting, but Mose said it was no accident that his house was targeted. Earlier that month the Muslim extremists, who had suspected he was a convert to Christianity as he had worked for Christian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), confirmed that he had come to faith in Christ and was therefore worthy of death. They tied his hands behind him and began hitting him with sticks and metallic objects, he said.

He sustained a deep cut on his heel. They stomped on his stomach, damaging his urinary system, he said. Neighbors who heard his cries came out in large numbers, forcing the attackers to flee. Mose said he knew then it was time to relocate.

After spending a month with neighbors recovering from his injuries, he and his family fled to Lower Juba in March, then to Kismayo. Kismayo is al Shabaab's economic lifeline, where the extremists receive goods by ship, as well as ransom money from piracy. The Kenyan military has besieged the port town in an effort to flush out the militants after they were blamed for a spate of kidnappings of foreigners inside Kenyan territory.

Closely monitored by al Shabaab in Kismayo, the family headed toward Kenya in April, renting a donkey to carry their luggage and youngest child, 4 (their oldest, a daughter, is 19). Mose said it took them 18 days to traverse the 370 kilometers (230 miles) to Liboi, the border town on the Kenyan side, where the donkey died of exhaustion. They still had 100 kilometers (62 miles) to go to reach refugee camps in Dadaab.

For the next six months, the family lived in the Ifo refugee camp in Dadaab, where people flow freely in and out of the camp, including al Shabaab members in civilian garb. In September, Mose said, some al Shabaab members in the camp threatened to kill him. Somali Christian contacts in Kenya helped Mose move his family away from the border last month.

Having worked for NGOs while in Somalia, Mose became a target as al Shabaab sees the organizations as either Christian or spies for the West, he said. That reputation has followed him, subjecting his family to discrimination not only from the militants but also from other Somali Muslims; the threat continues in his undisclosed location in Kenya, which is more than 82 percent Christian with a Muslim population of 8.32 percent, according to Operation World.

Mose's wife bakes and sells bread to try to feed the family. She is due to give birth in January – to twins – and the family fears she may be unable to continue her micro-enterprise. Mose, meantime, said he is still in pain.

"At the moment, I cannot do heavy work," he said. "I have a lot of pain in my lower abdomen which needs medical attention. My back is also not good. Indeed our situation is not promising, especially taking care of a family of nine as a refugee. If we get asylum, then it will save my family."

### **Threatened**

Another Somali convert from Islam arrived in Kenya in 2001, but he and his family also are seeking a third country after Muslims in Nairobi recently posted his photo in a mosque, accusing him of being a threat to Islam.

The Muslims of Nairobi's Somali enclave in Eastleigh found out that Adam Musse Othman, 60, had translated biblical portions into Maay, one of the Somali dialects, and they also got hold of a copy of the Jesus Film that Othman had translated into Maay; they were able to identify the voice-over in the film as his, he said.

Othman said he was not safe from Islamic extremists in Nairobi who told him by phone that they were aware of his involvement in the production of the Christian film and the translation of biblical passages into Maay.

"I cannot take such threats lightly, hence my request for resettlement on security grounds where we can live peacefully, decently and freely – also, to save ourselves from death and violence," he said.

Othman, who walks with the aid of a cane and said he is suffering from various ailments, said he has made several applications to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for resettlement and is awaiting a reply.

"I feel that our case needs urgent attention, given the current situation surrounding our well-being," he said. "With the increasing radicalization of Islam in Somalia, and the potential spillover effects into Kenya, I feel unsafe living in Kenya with my family."

Othman said his absence from mosque prayers had led his Muslim friends and relatives to shun him and his family.

"There are no cordial relations between us, and I have received several threatening phone calls and short text messages in my phone by people who claim to know that I am a Christian," he said. "I have reported this matter to Pangani police station. The threats to me and my family from Islamic radicals are still haunting me here in Nairobi. There are people who know me and my family and are suspicious of my faith. When my wife visits Eastleigh, she has to cover her face to avoid being identified."

Othman left Somalia fearing either the civil war or those hostile to his Christian faith would kill him, he said.

"The current situation in Somalia, the emergence of al Shabaab and the introduction of sharia [Islamic law], makes it unthinkable that I can ever return to Somalia," he said.

He worked as medical liaison officer with a Christian NGO based in Mogadishu between 1992 and 1995; later his family moved to Baidoa when the war intensified.

"That kind of work proved dangerous to me since I started getting threatening phone calls from Islamic extremists," he said. "I also felt that some members of my sub-clan who knew about me were not happy, judging from the way they constantly challenged me to state my spiritual standing since I was working with a Christian NGO, and this made me feel highly insecure."

At first he did not take the threats seriously, he said. But then Islamic extremists shot dead his cousin, Abdi Washed, a Christian, in Mogadishu in 1994, and shortly thereafter three friends were killed at Bakaro Market in Mogadishu.

"The killings were carefully planned assassinations," he said. "I was then warned by my close friends and relatives that I was next in the list of Christians targeted for assassination."

Heavy fighting in Baidoa made it difficult for Othman to cross into Kenya. He was able to leave Somalia by air in 2001, and the following year his family joined him after traveling on foot and by bus.

Previously he had worked in Yemen with a Christian group, he said, arriving there in 1986 after completing theological studies abroad. It would prove to be one of his first experiences with people hostile to Christianity.

"Some people unknown to me reported to the Yemeni authorities that I was a Christian," he said. "I was arrested and imprisoned for nine months that year at Sana'a Central Prison."

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## **Somali convert to Christianity kidnapped, beheaded**

### ***Islamic extremists from al Shabaab suspected of murdering Christian***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct News (12.09.2011) / HRWF (14.09.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> - A kidnapped Christian convert from Islam was found decapitated on Sept. 2 on the outskirts of Hudur City in Bakool region, in southwestern Somalia.

Juma Nuradin Kamil was forced into a car by three suspected Islamic extremists from the al Shabaab terrorist group on Aug. 21, area sources said. After members of his community thoroughly combed the area looking for him, at 2 p.m. on Sept. 2 one of them found Kamil's body dumped on a street.

The kidnapping and subsequent manner of murder suggests that al Shabaab militants had been monitoring him, Christian leaders said. Muslim extremists from al Shabaab, a militant group with ties to al Qaeda, have vowed to rid Somalia of Christianity, and they control the area some 400 kilometers from Mogadishu.

A Christian who saw Kamil's body said it bore the marks of an al Shabaab killing, according to a leader in Somalia's underground church who lives in another city.

"It is usual for the al Shabaab to decapitate those they suspect to have embraced the Christian faith, or sympathizers of western ideals," the leader said. "Our brother accepted the Christian faith three years ago and was determined in his faith in God. We greatly miss him."

An area resident said he was on his way to his house when he saw a crowd of stunned people gazing at the corpse.

"I could not immediately comprehend what might have gone wrong, only to learn that someone had been decapitated," the resident said. "His head was put on his chest."

A Christian said the area community initially did not bury the body out of fear of al Shabaab extremists seeing them associated with a newly discovered convert to Christianity.

"The community feared burying him, and his body lay in the open for two days before unknown people buried him secretly," he said.

Another Christian convert who lives in another city said Kamil had become a Christian three years ago.

"This is very sad news for the community," he said.

A source in Mogadishu with ties to Somalia's underground church confirmed the murder of Kamil.

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), but 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 Sheik Ahmed has embraced a version of sharia that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

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. Al Shabaab has been designated a terrorist organization by several western governments.

In the Lower Shabele region of Somalia earlier this year, two Muslim extremists murdered a member of a secret Christian community, sources said. An area source told Compass two al Shabaab militants shot 21-year-old Hassan Adawe Adan in Shalambod town after entering his house on April 18.

In Warbhigly village on the outskirts of Mogadishu, a mother of four was killed for her Christian faith on Jan. 7 by Islamic extremists from al Shabaab, a relative said. The relative, who requested anonymity, said Asha Mberwa, 36, was killed when the Islamic extremists cut her throat in front of villagers who came out of their homes as witnesses.

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## **New Christian convert from Islam murdered**

***Muslim militants shoot young man dead after learning he had begun to follow Christ***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct (20.04.2011) / HRWF Int. (21.04.2011) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net>  
– Two Muslim extremists in Somalia on Monday (April 18) murdered a member of a secret Christian community in Lower Shabele region as part of a campaign to rid the country of Christianity, sources said.

An area source told Compass two al Shabaab militants shot 21-year-old Hassan Adawe Adan in Shalambod town after entering his house at 7:30 p.m.

“Two al Shabaab members dragged him out of his house, and after 10 minutes they fired several shots on him,” said an area source who requested anonymity. “He then died immediately.”

The militants then shouted “*Allahu Akbar* [God is greater]” before fleeing, he said.

Adan, single and living with his Muslim family, was said to have converted to Christianity several months ago. Area Christians said they suspected someone had informed the Islamic militants of his conversion. One source said that a relative who belonged to al Shabaab had told Adan’s mother that he suspected her son was a Christian.

“This incident is making other converts live in extreme fear, as the militants always keep an open eye to anyone professing the Christian faith,” the source said.

Two months ago there was heavy fighting between the rebel al Shabaab militants and forces of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), in which the TFG managed to recover some areas controlled by the rebels. Al Shabaab insurgents control much of southern and central Somalia.

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), but 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 Sheik Ahmed has embraced a version of *sharia* that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

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.

On Jan. 7, a mother of four was killed for her Christian faith on the outskirts of Mogadishu by al Shabaab militia, according to a relative. The relative, who requested anonymity, said Asha Mberwa, 36, was killed in Warbhigly village when the Islamic extremists cut her throat in front of villagers who came out of their homes as witnesses.

She is survived by her children – ages 12, 8, 6 and 4 – and her husband, who was not home at the time she was apprehended. Her husband and children have fled to an undisclosed location.

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## **Somali Islamists kill 24th Christian convert, another escapes**

International Christian Concern (23.02.2011) / HRWF Int. (26.02.2011) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> – International Christian Concern has learned that on January 26 members of the Somali Islamic radical group, Al-Shabaab, killed a Christian convert from

Islam in the Somali capital of Mogadishu. Another Christian convert escaped from Al-Shabaab's detention on January 29.

The Islamists killed Abdirahman Hussein Roble after accusing him of spying and *fitna* (religious discord) among Muslims. *Fitna* is an Islamic term used to derogatively describe Christian evangelism among Muslims.

On February 9, two eye witnesses notified Abdirahman's widow and relatives about his murder. Abdirahman, who converted to Christianity in 2009, was the father of two children. Abdirahman is the twenty-fourth Christian to be killed by the Somali Islamists since 2009.

Another Christian convert from Islam escaped from a makeshift detention center run by Al-Shabaab. Hassan (name changed for security reasons) was arrested on January 8 in Afgoye district of Somalia. He was repeatedly interrogated about his faith and ministry. Hassan escaped while the Islamists were attending evening prayer. Hassan is the first Christian to escape from the hands of the Islamists.

Al-Shabaab is an al-Qaeda linked organization known for enforcing a strict version of Sharia law by stoning adulterers to death, cutting off the hands of thieves and murdering Christian converts from Islam. According to ICC sources, Al-Shabaab is losing broad support in Somalia due to its brutality.

"Al-Shabaab's unrestrained Islamic fundamentalism must be condemned by the international community, especially by the moderate Islamic community," said ICC's Regional Manager for Africa, Jonathan Racho.

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## **At least seven killed in Somalia unrest**

AFP (14.02.2011) / HRWF Int. (15.02.2011) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> – At least seven people were killed in Mogadishu Monday after clashes broke out between pro-government Sufi sect militants and Al-Qaeda linked Islamists, officials and witnesses said.

The clashes erupted around Maka Al-Mukarama road where the Sufi militants supporting the government were stationed after heavily armed Shebab fighters attacked their positions.

Both sides claimed victory in the fighting.

"The fighting today was very heavy and we inflicted loses on the enemy. Two of our soldiers were killed and three others injured. We arrested several of their fighters during the fighting," Yonis Ali, spokesman for the Sufi militants told reporters.

Witnesses said five civilians were also killed by stray mortar and heavy artillery shells exchanged during the clashes and medical sources said the number of wounded civilians reached 17.

"I saw five civilians who died in the crossfire, three of them were killed after a heavy artillery shell struck a house in Bakara market, eight others were also injured in the same neighbourhood," witness Hussein Wardhigley said.

The clashes came after remarks by Defence Minister Abdihakim Haji Mohamud Fiqi vowing to eliminate Shebab militants from the country.



"We have given opportunities of negotiations to the Shebab elements; unfortunately they have failed to benefit from their chances and... we will eliminate them from the country. From now on, we will put all of our forces together to fight them," Fiqi told reporters in Mogadishu.

Monday's fighting was the heaviest in the capital in weeks.

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## **Somali mother of four slaughtered for her faith**

### ***Al Shabaab militants carry out ritual slaying of Christian found to be 'apostate'***

By Simba Tian

Compass Direct (17.01.2011) / HRWF Int. (18.01.2011) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net>  
– A mother of four was killed for her Christian faith on Jan. 7 on the outskirts of Mogadishu, Somalia by Islamic extremists from al Shabaab militia, a relative said.

The relative, who requested anonymity, said Asha Mberwa, 36, was killed at 5:15 p.m. in Warbhigly village; the Islamic extremists from the insurgent group had arrested her outside her house the previous day at 8:30 a.m. She died when the militants cut her throat in front of villagers who came out of their homes as witnesses.

She is survived by her children – ages 12, 8, 6 and 4 – and her husband, who was not home at the time she was apprehended. They had married in 1993.

Her relative, whose location is also withheld for security reasons, said he had phoned her on Jan. 5 to try to make arrangements for moving her family out of the area. Al Shabaab extremists, who control large parts of Mogadishu, were able to monitor the conversation and confirm that she had become a Christian, he said.

He told Compass by phone that Mberwa feared that she and her family members' lives were threatened.

"Asha had been receiving threatening messages" after al Shabaab monitored her previous communications with him, he said.

Her husband, Abdinazir Mohammed Hassan, fled to an unknown location. Mberwa's relative said a "good Samaritan" in Mogadishu was caring for her four children. The traumatized children continue to weep and cry out for their mother, he said.

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



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