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PRESS STATEMENT

STOP INTIMIDATION, DETENTION AND TORTURE OF JOURNALISTS IN SOMALI

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) expresses strong concern about the safety and wellbeing of journalists and media workers in Somali.

Reports reaching us suggest that on Friday, 15 August, heavily armed security forces raided and closed both Radio Shabelle and SkyFM.

In addition, nineteen media workers were arrested in what is believed to be an act of retaliation to news reports and interviews broadcast by stations concerning an interview Somali President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, had given to the US-based PBS television.

According to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), out of the nineteen media workers arrested, sixteen were released and three Journalists are still being detained at the National Security and Intelligence Agency (NISA) Headquarters, amid reports that they have been subjected to abuse and torture for confession. These include Abdiimalik Yusuf Mohamud (Chairman, Shabelle Media Network), Ahmed Abdi Hassan (Editor-in-chief, Radio Shabelle) and Mohamud Mohamed Dahir (Director, SkyFM).

Reports reaching us also indicate that other NUSOJ officials were summoned by the National Security and Intelligence Agency (NISA) for questioning.

ITUC-Africa strongly condemns and deplores these flagrant violation of human and trade union rights; demand the immediate and unconditional release of Abdiimalik Yusuf Mohamud (Chairman, Shabelle Media Network), Ahmed Abdi Hassan (Editor-in-chief, Radio Shabelle) and Mohamud Mohamed Dahir (Director, SkyFM); and the investigation and prosecution of all persons implicated in these horrific and oppressive acts of intimidation and torture.

ITUC-Africa recognizes the importance of media and media workers as an institution and professionals who are entrusted with the responsibility to provide members of society with crucial information to enable them make informed decisions. In addition, as critical institutions and professionals, the media and media workers are relevant

and necessary for promoting and strengthening democracy, accountability and good governance.

We therefore urge those in authority to take the necessary measures so that these oppressive acts against NUSOJ officials are immediately stopped.

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General Secretary