URGENT ACTION

DROP CHARGES AGAINST JOURNALIST AND POET

Poet Ismail Yusuf Abdi and journalist Abdiqani Hussein Abokor were arrested in Hargeisa, Somaliland, on August 28 and 29, 2026 respectively, following an interview published online by Abdiqani Hussein Abokor on August 27, in which Ismail Yusuf Abdi recited a poem warning the Somaliland President would be cursed if he did not intervene in authorities' alleged unlawful seizure of two plots of land belonging to the poet. On November 11, they were released on bail. However, the charges against them remain in place. Amnesty International urges the Somaliland authorities to drop all charges and end all criminal proceedings against the two men, as they stem solely from the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- Click here to report your action(s) on ***UA 118.26***. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

President of Somaliland
Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi
26 June, Presidential Street
Hargeisa, Somaliland
Email: info@slpresidency.com
X: @MadaxtooyadaJSL

Note: There is no domestic address for this UA.
Somaliland is not a UN Member State so there is no UN Permanent Mission in NYC.
The United States also does not consider Somaliland to be a sovereign state, so there is no U.S. Embassy

Dear President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi,

I am concerned about the ongoing prosecution of **Ismail Yusuf Abdi** (also known as "**Jiheeye**"), and **Abdiqani Hussein Abokor**, (also known as "**Baylood**").

On August 28, Ismail Yusuf Abdi, a well-known poet, was arrested in his home without an arrest warrant. He was informed his arrest was in connection with a poem that he recited in an interview published the day before, warning that Your Excellency risked being cursed if you did not intervene in authorities' illegal seizure of two plots of land belonging to the poet. On August 29, Abdiqani Hussein Abokor, a freelance journalist, who conducted the interview featuring the poem with Ismail Yusuf Abdi, was summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department and subsequently presented himself voluntarily. He was then informed that he too was under arrest, also without a warrant. The first hearing in their case took place on October 1, during which their defense lawyer challenged the charges, arguing that they were unrelated to the reasons for their arrest. Two months after their arrest, they were both charged with publication of false information. In addition, Abdiqani Hussein Abokor was charged with working without a license, while Ismael Yusuf Abdi was charged with public incitement. Although both were released on bail on November 11, the charges against them remain in place and they continue to face criminal proceedings.

I urge you to immediately drop all charges against Ismail Yusuf Abdi and Abdiqani Hussein Abokor and end all criminal proceedings against them as they are both being prosecuted solely for the peaceful exercise of their freedom of expression.

Yours sincerely,

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Poet **Ismail Yusuf Abdi** was angered by the fact that two plots of his land were, according to him, unlawfully seized by the authorities in August 2026, which he expressed in poetry shared during an interview published by **Abdiqani Hussein Abokor** on his Facebook page. He warned Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi that he would be cursed if he did not intervene. Ismail Yusuf Abdi was charged with public incitement, which carries a sentence of between three and twelve years' imprisonment if convicted, while Abdiqani Hussein Abokor was charged with working without a license, punishable by up to six months' imprisonment upon conviction. Both men were also charged with publication of false information, punishable by between six months and three years' imprisonment.

Abdiqani Hussein Abokor, the founder of Heegan Media Tv and a freelance journalist for over ten years, has been targeted by the authorities in the past. On April 1, 2026, his office was reportedly raided by police officers in plain clothes who destroyed doors and equipment. Abdiqani Hussein Abokor contacted the local police, but they claimed it was not them behind the raid and that they would investigate the matter.

Somaliland authorities have for years cracked down on press freedom, including through the numerous arrests of journalists and media workers. Another journalist, **Abdirahman Mohamed Ege**, was held without charge since October 22 in Hargeisa, Somaliland after interviewing a presidential aspirant of the Federal Government of Somalia national elections in 2027. On November 12, he was charged with non-observance of orders by authorities and publication of false information. On November 16, he was convicted of the former and acquitted of the latter. The offense carries a penalty of three months' imprisonment or a fine of $100. He was subsequently released upon payment of the fine.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Somali, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: May 17, 2027

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ismael Yusuf Abdi, Abdiqani Hussein Abokor (both he/him)