

Somaliland police shut down Horn Cable TV, arrest its editor

The Committee to Protect Journalists called on authorities in the breakaway region of Somaliland to immediately allow the privately owned Horn Cable TV to operate freely and to unconditionally release its chief editor, Abdiqaadir Saleban Aseyr, also known as Coday.



People take part in a parade to mark the 24th self-declared independence day for the breakaway region of Somaliland in the capital Hargeisa on May 18, 2015. On November 18, 2019, Somaliland police shut down a TV station and arrested its editor. Credit: CPJ/Reuters/Feisal Omar.

Police in Hargeisa, the capital, yesterday morning summoned Abdiqaadir to the headquarters of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) where they arrested him and showed another station employee who had accompanied Abdiqaadir a written notice indicating that the Somaliland office of Horn Cable TV would be closed indefinitely, according to Abdikarim Saed Salah, a Horn Cable TV journalist who spoke to CPJ. Abdikarim said the station employee was not provided with a copy of the notice. No court warrant was issued for Abdiqaadir's arrest, according to Abdikarim and [a statement](#) by the Hargeisa-based Human Rights Centre (HRC), a local nongovernmental organization.

Today, Abdiqaadir was brought to a Hargeisa court where police were granted seven days to hold him in custody, pending investigation into charges that remain unclear, according to Abdikarim, who was in court. However, the court rejected the suspension of Horn Cable TV though the station remains shut as authorities appealed the decision.

"The use of arbitrary arrests and shutdown orders to silence critical journalism does not serve the people of Somaliland, who are entitled to a range of news and opinion," said CPJ's Sub-Saharan Africa representative, Muthoki Mumo. "We call on authorities to immediately release Abdiqaadir Saleban and to allow Horn Cable TV to operate without interference."

Abdikarim told CPJ that police in court cited Horn Cable TV's reporting in asking for more time to investigate Abdiqaadir, including a report aired last week in which [an airline](#) complained about aviation safety in Somaliland and [an interview](#) with [Suldaan Wabar](#), [a militia leader](#) in the region. Abdiqaadir was summoned by police and appeared November 14 to answer questions regarding the station's reporting on these specific stories.

CPJ's email to Attorney General Hassan Aden went unanswered today. Somaliland's information minister, Mohamed Muse Dirie, did not answer CPJ's phone calls or respond to a message that was delivered to his phone via messaging app. A message submitted through the Ministry of Information's [website](#) also went unanswered.

Abdikarim told CPJ that the station continues to air content via satellite and [livestreaming](#) on its website in Somaliland from its studios in Mogadishu, Nairobi, and London.

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