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ARTICLE 19

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Kenya and Somalia: Deaths of Two Journalists Highlights Continued Risks for the Media

It's just a few short weeks into the year and two journalists have lost their lives, simply for doing their jobs. In Kenya, freelance journalist Francis Nyaruri was abducted and killed, and in Somalia, radio journalist Said Tahlil Ahmed was shot dead in a market. These killings are a reminder of the continued danger that so many media workers currently face in the East and Horn of Africa.

Francis Nyaruri, who wrote under the pen name Mong'are Mokuu, was a reporter for the Kenyan private paper, *Weekly Citizen* in Nyamira, Nyanza district. His family had reported him missing on 15 January and his body was discovered on 30 January. Nyaruri had previously published articles exposing corruption, brutality and other malpractice by the local police.

The Kenyan police are reportedly one of the least trusted institutions in the country, with a recent Steadman Group opinion poll showing that only 18 per cent of the public trust the police, largely because of corruption and bribe taking.

ARTICLE 19 calls on the Kenyan authorities to ensure that the killers of Francis Nyaruri are brought to justice.

ARTICLE 19 also mourns the loss of *HornAfrik* radio station's director, Said Tahlil Ahmed. A highly respected journalist who had remained in Somalia in spite of the country's ongoing violent conflict, he was shot dead in Bakara market in Mogadishu on 4 February.

The media is frequently targeted by armed factions in Somalia, forcing many Somali journalists to flee. The former director of *HornAfrik*, Ali Imam Sharmake, was killed in August 2007, whilst two other journalists have been killed in the past year.

HornAfrik radio has done much to promote freedom of expression, press freedom and media development in the country, including its contribution to the development of a Code of Ethical Conduct for the Somali media.

ARTICLE 19 Executive Director, Dr. Agnès Callamard, stated: "*Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, as enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.*" She continued: "*Media practitioners must be able to exercise this right in safety, without fear of attack or danger to their lives.*"

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information: please contact Roxanne Abdulali, roxanne@article19.org. Tel: +254 20 386 2230/2.
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.