

## Somalia: Shabelle Media Network director gunned down outside home in Mogadishu

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Shabelle Media Network director Hassan Osman Abdi, better known locally as “Hassan Fantastic,” was gunned down outside his Mogadishu home at 6:30 p.m. today, Reporters Without Borders has learned from its partner organization in Somalia, the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ).

“Abdi is the first journalist to be killed in 2012 in Somalia, Africa’s deadliest country for media personnel,” Reporters Without Borders said. “Our thoughts go out to his family and fellow journalists, who are yet again mourning a colleague’s death. He is the third Shabelle Media Network director to be murdered, following Bashir Nur Gedi in 2007 and Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe in 2009.”

The press freedom organization added: “Violence against journalists in Somalia is sustained by impunity for those responsible. It is quite clear that Abdi was deliberately targeted. We call for a serious and impartial investigation that leads to the identification of his murderers.”

Abdi was slain as he returned home from work. Witnesses said five gunmen shot him outside his home after following from his office. Radio Shabelle – a part of the Shabelle Media Network, along with a TV station and a news website – had recently covered cases of government corruption.

Born in 1982 in the far-south Lower Juba Region, Abdi was 29 and was the father of three children. He was Branch Secretary of NUSOJ in Banadir (the region that includes Mogadishu) and had worked for Radio Shabelle for three years before taking over as head of Shabelle Media Network on 20 October 2011.

Radio Shabelle is Somalia’s most renowned privately-owned radio station and the one that is most exposed to violence. It was awarded the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize in the “Media” category in December 2010.

Somalia is ranked 164th out of 179 countries in the annual press freedom index that Reporters Without Borders published on 25 January. In its 2011 annual overview, Reporters Without Borders ranked Mogadishu as one of the world’s 10 most dangerous places for journalists.

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