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جمهورية الصومال
وزارة الإعلام والبريد والاتصالات
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REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA
The Ministry of Information,
Posts & Telecommunications
Communications Office

Press Release

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NUSOJ former secretary general's claims are totally fabricated

(Mogadishu, January 24, 2012), Today we have read the report titled **“Lives and Rights of Journalists Under Threat”**, and would like to shed some light into the misinformation contained in it and a little background information conveniently left out by the author, Omar Faruk. We also ask that this important and relevant information be circulated with Mr. Faruk's report and placed in his Website along with his report.

While we agree that 2011 was a difficult year for Journalist in Somalia, the report makes claims and accusations that are not factual with regard to the roles of the TFG, The Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications, Radio Mogadishu and the Somali National Television.

Some facts first:

1. Since February 2011, NUSOJ removed its Secretary General Omar Faruk from his post for mismanagement and the misappropriation of funds. NUSOJ then appointed an interim leadership.
2. In May 2011 NUSOJ held a well-attended conference in Mogadishu and elected new leadership in free and fair elections, according to their own rules and regulations. See link below for more information and documentation. Upon the completion of the NUSOJ General Assembly Conference, the new leadership received letters of support from both the Ministries of Information & Labor (see below):

<http://nuso.org.so/reports/Docs/General%20Assembly%20report.pdf>.

<http://nuso.org.so/reports/Docs/from%20the%20ministry%20of%20Information.pdf>

<http://nuso.org.so/reports/Docs/from%20Ministry%20of%20Labor.pdf>

3. NUSOJ and its members brought a court case against the former Secretary General of the Organization, Mr. Omar Faruk for misappropriating money collected for injured journalists.
4. When Omar Faruk visited Somalia for the first time in several years, those reporters who had a claim against him went to the courts, and when he attempted to leave the country without answering the court order, they got a court injection to stop him from leaving the country. All of these were done by the journalists and their lawful representatives without

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- any interference from either the Ministry of information or the Ministry of labour.
5. Omar, in his report, hints on questions on NUSOJ Finances that was raised by the authorities in relation to the claims against him, of large sums of money missing without a trail during Omar's reign.
 6. The new leadership also took over the offices of NUSOJ and no Government Ministry was involved or occupied NUSOJ Offices, nor will it ever do such a thing (see below):
http://nuso.org.so/press_freedom/archives/2011/May/NUSOJ_holds_its_General_Assembly_and_refutes.htm.

Unfortunately, Omar leaves out the background of this conflict and court case and blames the Ministry of Information for all his wrong doings, while making the absurd and false claim that TFG government denied journalists to hold meetings or to travel to the outside world. Omar wrote”

“The TFG ministries of information, labour, youth and sport, in addition to security powers have been responsible for:

1. *Arrests of journalists,*
2. *Persecution of journalists through initiation of bogus criminal proceedings against them,*
3. *Intimidation of journalists and media houses through demand that they pay unlawful registration fees,*
4. *Criminal interrogations of journalists' leaders,*
5. *Censorship of media houses,*
6. *Travel bans on journalists*
7. *And even alleged killing of a journalist by TFG security officers*

Yet over the next four pages to the end of the report, Omar fails to produce concrete examples or evidence supporting his claims. Unless of course Omar is referring to himself as the aggrieved Journalist in relation to the still pending lawsuit against him by injured Journalists and the travel ban they obtained from the court against him or the courts investigation into the claims of missing funds.

7. RADIO MOGADISHU:

- a) Radio Mogadishu reputation and use - Omar claims that Radio Mogadishu is a worthless propaganda outlet for the government, this, simply is not true. Radio Mogadishu while not sharing the propaganda and hate spewed by Al-Shabaab Media outlets is a balanced, fair and well liked media outlet.
- b) In fact a survey by an independent polling firm concluded that Radio Mogadishu is the most listened to Radio Station in Mogadishu. Its role in countering the Al-Shabaab propaganda was so effective that Al-Shabaab put out an edict threat anyone caught listening to Radio Mogadishu with arrest and physical harm.
- c) Also the website of Radio Mogadishu receives 10s of thousands of visitors daily, a testament to the popularity of the Radio Station and the quality of the services it provides to the public.

8. SOMALI NATIONAL TELEVISION:

The Somali National Television (SNTV) was one of the major accomplishments of the Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications and reaches Africa, Asia (Middle & Far East), Europe & North America. It is broadcast on three satellites and is the furthest reaching Somali Language Speaking Television in the World. In the short period it has been on air, it has developed a huge following as indicated by the messages and callers for call-in-shows. Again the television is having a significant impact on the quality of information available to the public both inside and outside the country.

9. It is no secret how the Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications has been very helpful to Journalist both those who work for the Ministry and those who work in the private sector. We have provided regular transportation where, they had none before, to better protect them. We have provided a number of training sessions and included journalists who work for both the private and public sectors.
10. Registration of Media outlets and Media Unions was introduced and accomplished for all media related organizations. NUSOJ did register with the Ministry of Information.
11. At no point did the Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications go to court, ordered police to raid or interfered with the operations of any media outlet or Union. We regret Omar made these baseless claims and ask that interested parties reading this report check the facts with the current management of NUSOJ in Mogadishu www.nusoj.org.so.

In his report, he claimed that the killers of the journalist go with impunity and listed four deaths in 2011. First of all, it has been a well known fact that Mogadishu had been a very dangerous place for over a long period, weather someone is journalist or not. It has been particularly dangerous for journalist when the government could not even check Al Shabaab's reign of terror against its own employees and MP's and when criminality and armed robberies were rife in the city. During that time many lives were lost, including many journalists.

But since the new TFG cabinet took over, every murder of a journalist was properly and urgently investigated and culprits brought in front of courts. Every effort was also made to identify, capture and arrest any murderer, and more so when it involved a journalist.

Of the four cases mentioned by Mr. Faruk, the last two happened when Mogadishu has been stabilized and the full rigor of the law was applied by the police and the courts, whenever a murder took place and the propagators could found.

All Mr. Faruk has done is list the number of journalists who have been killed this year. Everybody can get this information from the police or by listening to the radios, and then he goes to the international organizations to collect money lining his own pockets; while the legitimate NUSOJ has been organizing demonstrations for murdered journalists, campaigned for their families welfare, organizing trainings and workshops for many journalists.

We will be glad to discuss this matter further with any parties concerned.

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