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**News**

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## SOMALIA: CHRISTIAN AID WORKER BEHEADED FOR CONVERTING FROM ISLAM

**Anti-Christian violence spills into Kenya as Somali Muslims attack in Nairobi.**



**NAIROBI, Kenya, October 27** (Compass Direct News) – Among at least 24 aid workers killed in Somalia this year was one who was beheaded last month specifically for converting from Islam to Christianity, among other charges, according to an eyewitness.

Muslim extremists from the al Shabab group fighting the transitional government on Sept. 23 sliced the head off of Mansuur Mohammed, 25, a humanitarian aid worker, before horrified onlookers of Manyafulka village, 10 kilometers (six miles) from Baidoa.

The militants had intercepted Mohammed and a driver, who managed to escape, earlier in the morning. Sources close to Mohammed's family said he converted from Islam to Christianity in 2005.

**Mansuur Mohammed**

The eyewitness, who requested anonymity for security reasons, said the militants that afternoon gathered the villagers of Manyafulka, telling them that they would prepare a feast for them. The people gathered anticipating the slaughter of a sheep, goat or camel according to local custom.

Five masked men emerged carrying guns, wielding Somali swords and dragging the handcuffed Mohammed. One pulled back Mohammed's head, exposing his face as he scraped his sword against his short hair as if to sharpen it. Another recited the Quran as he proclaimed that Mohammed was a "murtid," an Arabic term for one who converts from Islam to Christianity.

The Muslim militant announced that Mohammed was an infidel and a spy for occupying Ethiopian soldiers.

Mohammed remained calm with an expressionless face, never uttering a word, said the eyewitness. As the chanting of "Allah Akubar [God is greater]" rose to a crescendo, one of the militiamen twisted his head, allowing the other to slit his neck. When the head was finally severed from the torso, the killers cheered as they displayed it to the petrified crowd.

The militants allowed one of their accomplices to take a video of the slaughter using a mobile phone. The video was later circulated secretly and sold in Somalia and in neighboring countries in what many see as a strategy to instill fear among those contemplating conversion from Islam to Christianity.

Unconfirmed reports indicated that a similar incident took place in Lower Juba province of Somalia in July, when Christians found with Bibles were publicly executed. Their families fled to Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, and such killings are forcing other Christians to flee to neighboring Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti.

**Somalis Attacking Somalis**

Somali refugees to Kenya include Nur Mohammed Hassan, in Nairobi under U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees asylum. In spite of the protection, two weeks ago five Somali Muslims broke into Mohammed Hassan's house and beat him and his family, he told Compass.

"On Oct. 14 five Muslims entered my house around 10 o'clock in the night and forced us out after beating us indiscriminately," Mohammed Hassan said, adding that the youngest of his eight children suffers from a liver disease. "Thank God the police arrived immediately and saved our lives. For two days now we have been sleeping outside in the cold. We have been receiving police security, but for how long will this continue?"

Mohammed Hassan now lives in Eastleigh, Nairobi with his wife and children. He had fled Mogadishu after Muslims murdered his sister, Mariam Mohammed Hassan, in April 2005, allegedly for distributing Bibles in the capital.

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"We are nowadays no better than our fellow Somali Christians inside Somalia who are killed like dogs when discovered to be Christians," Mohammed Hassan said. "We are not safe living here in Eastleigh. The Muslims killed my sister in Mogadishu, and now they are planning to kill me and my family."

The last three years in Nairobi, he said, he has suffered many setbacks at the hands of other Somali immigrants.

"Indeed the situation for the Muslim Christians in Kenya and Somalia is disastrous and horrifying – we are risking our lives for choosing to follow Christ," he said. "My family is in danger. No peace, no security. We are lacking the basic necessities of life."

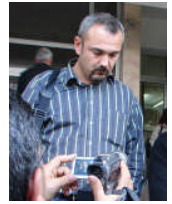
One of the most dangerous countries in the world, Somalia is subject to suicide bombings, sea piracy and routine human rights violations. Islamic militants object to foreign troop intervention, especially those from neighboring Ethiopia. Christians and anyone sympathetic to Western ideals are targeted, with foreign aid workers especially vulnerable in the past year.

Aid groups have counted 24 aid workers, 20 of them Somalis, who have been killed this year in Somalia, with more than 100 attacks on aid agencies reported. In their strategy to destabilize the government, the Islamic militants target relief groups as the U.N. estimates 3.2 million Somalis (nearly a third of the population) depend on such aid.

Somali Islamic clerics such as Ahlsunna Waljamea have condemned the killing of aid workers in Somalia.

\*\*\* Photos of Mansuur Mohammed (low quality, from video) and Nur Mohammed Hassan are available electronically. Contact Compass Direct News for pricing and transmittal.

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