

Islamic Extremists in Somalia Kill Another Church Leader

✖ Islamic militants in Somalia this week killed a woman who led an underground Christian movement in the war-torn country.

Sources told Compass Direct News that a leader of the Islamic extremist militia al Shabaab, in Lower Juba, shot to death 46-year-old Mariam Muhina Hussein at 2 p.m. on Monday in Marerey village after discovering she had six Bibles. Marerey is five miles from Jilib, part of the neighboring Middle Juba region.

Local sources said that on Sunday the extremist leader identified only as Sheikh Arbow sent his wife to the house of Hussein, a Somali Bantu, to confirm the presence of the Bibles. Pretending to be interested in Christianity, the militia leader's wife confirmed the existence of the Bibles.

The sources said Hussein readily agreed to discuss Christianity with Arbow's wife and read parts of the Bible with her. When Arbow's wife requested one of the Bibles, however, Hussein demurred.

"She told her that it might not be safe for her, preferring instead that she could visit her regularly for discussions," said one source. "She then left and promised to visit again soon."

The next day, Arbow arrived at Hussein's house with other men and, in a friendly manner, claimed that he wanted to check something in the Bible. Knowing only that Arbow was a fellow ethnic Somali Bantu and having met his wife the previous day, Hussein innocently gave one to him, sources said.

"Immediately, Arbow told her that their mission was to look for Christians who have defiled the Islamic religion," a

source said. "There and then she lacked words to say. She was ordered to get the other Bibles out, and she did."

Upon receiving the Bibles, sources said, Arbow fired three bullets at Hussein, who died instantly.

The Bibles were published in Swahili; besides this East African lingua franca, Bantus in Lower Juba also speak Kiswahili.

Compass has confirmed the killing with various sources in Nairobi and Somalia who cannot be identified for security reasons.

Hussein's death comes a few weeks after the rebel militants killed another one of the leaders of Somalia's Christian movement for distributing Bibles. Al shabaab militants shot 69-year-old Omar Khalafe on Sept. 15 at a checkpoint they controlled 6 miles from Merca, a Christian source told Compass. m

Al Shabaab, said to have links with al Qaeda terrorists, controls much of southern parts of Somalia, as well as other areas of the nation. Besides striving to topple President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu, the militants also seek to impose sharia (Islamic law).

In August al Shabaab extremists seeking evidence that a Somali man had converted from Islam to Christianity shot him dead near the Somali border with Kenya, sources said. The rebels killed 41-year-old Ahmed Matan in Bulahawa, Somalia on Aug. 18.

In Mahadday Weyne, 62 miles north of the Somali capital of Mogadishu, al Shabaab Islamists on July 20 shot to death another convert from Islam, Mohammed Sheikh Abdiraman, at 7

a.m., eyewitnesses told Compass. The militants also reportedly beheaded seven Christians on July 10. Reuters reported that they were killed in Baidoa for being Christians and “spies.”

On Feb. 21 al shabaab militants beheaded two young boys in Somalia because their Christian father refused to divulge information about a church leader, according to Musa Mohammed Yusuf, the 55-year-old father who was living in a Kenya refugee camp when he spoke with Compass.