

Christian Convert Dragged From Home and Publicly Executed in Somalia

Suspected al-Shabab militants have murdered a woman professing the Christian faith earlier this month after breaking and entering into her home in Mogadishu.

Sufia was at home with her parents when a group of armed men burst into her home. Leaving her parents untouched, the men grabbed Sufia, forcefully dragged her from the home at gunpoint, and then publicly shot her, firing into the on-looking crowd as friends and neighbors attempted to save her.

Immediately following the execution, Sufia's killers fled the scene. Despite ongoing efforts by police to locate them, Sufia's murderers remain at-large as of this release. The suspected work of al-Shabab, an al-Qaida-linked terrorist network in Somalia, Sufia's death could be the third al-Shabab murder this month.

On April 22, Mogadishu Parliamentarian Abdiiaziz Isaaq Mursal was the second Somali lawmaker killed by al-Shabab militants in less than 48 hours for allowing the "invasion of the Christians into Somalia," referencing lawmakers' vote to accept financial support from Western governments and members of the African Union who have sent troops into Somalia to oppose Islamist rebel groups.

Isak Mohamed Rino, a fellow Parliamentarian, was the victim of an exploded bomb placed beneath his car on the morning of April 21. In response to the attacks, al-Shabab's spokesperson, Ali Dhere, was recorded on al-Shabab's Andulus radio in Barawe town saying, "We are on war against the apostates in Mogadishu. We will keep carrying attacks, targeting their lawmakers."

According to al-Shabab, all Somalis are born Muslims by default. Somalis found practicing other religions are considered guilty of apostasy. According to the fundamentalist brand of Islam al-Shabaab adheres to, apostasy occurs when a Muslim leaves Islam for another faith and should be put to death.

Several of the nation's leaders have publicly condemned the attacks on the two murdered Somali Parliamentarians; however, a public condemnation of the systematic execution of Somali Christians has yet to be heard. Speaking on the deaths of the two parliamentarians, president of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, said Sunday the "culture of lawlessness that has plagued Somalia for the last 23 years is coming to an end." Though similar calls to action have been made in the past, al-Shabaab continues to enjoy complete freedom in its sustained push to eradicate Somalia of its Christian population.

"Al-Shabab is an Islamic extremist group that has vowed to make Somalia 'purely Islamic,' " says International Christian Concern Regional Manager for Africa, William Stark. "The group adheres to a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam that includes the beheading of converts from Islam, or, as we've witnessed in Sufia's case, execution by firing squad.

"The group continues to terrorize not just Christians in Somalia, but any act, person, or policy that could be construed as supportive of Christianity in Somalia. As more Somalis return to Somalia following the establishment of the new government, steps must be taken to protect Christians and other religious minorities. The practice of kidnapping, torturing and publicly executing converts from Islam must be addressed by the international community and should have no place in modern society."

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