

Islamic Extremists Execute Young Convert in Somalia

Islamic extremists controlling part of the Somali capital of Mogadishu this month executed a young Christian they accused of trying to convert a 15-year-old Muslim to Christianity.

Members of the Islamic extremist group al Shabaab had taken 23-year-old Mumin Abdikarim Yusuf into custody on Oct. 28 after the 15-year-old boy reported him to the militants, an area source told Compass Direct News. Yusuf's body was found on Nov. 14 on an empty residential street in Mogadishu, with sources saying the convert from Islam was shot to death, probably some hours before dawn.

"Our brother Yusuf has been murdered," the source told Compass. "His body was dumped in Yaqshid district of Mogadishu, and his body is said to be on an empty residential street."

Al Shabaab, said to have links with al Qaeda terrorists, controls parts of Mogadishu and much of southern parts of Somalia, as well as other areas of the nation.

Their accusations against Yusuf had led the extremist group to raid Yusuf's home in Holwadag district, Mogadishu, sources said. After searching his home, militia didn't find anything relating to Christianity but still took him into custody.

Before Yusuf was executed by two shots to the head, reports filtered in to the Compass source that he had been badly beaten and his fingers broken as the Islamists tried to extract incriminating evidence against him and information about other Christians. The source later learned that Yusuf's body showed signs of torture; all of his front teeth were gone, and some of his fingers were broken, he said.

"We don't know the time he was murdered, but his freshly killed body was dumped in Yaqshid district at around 4:30 in the morning of Nov. 14, and due to the will of the family we have buried the body at around 3 p.m. on Nov. 14," the source said.

The clandestine Christians could not safely identify themselves to Yusuf's Muslim family, but they were able to indirectly assist the parents in burying him with dignity, the source said.

It is not known whether under torture Yusuf revealed information about area members of the hidden church, but underground church leaders have been relocating local Christians who knew him, the source said.

"We still don't know if the Shabaab did find any new evidence from Yusuf," he said.

Yusuf's Muslim parents did not know that their son was a Christian, and they had insisted to the al Shabaab militants that he was still a Muslim, the source said. The extremists accused the family of not reporting that their son had converted to Christianity, and they ordered his mother and father to appear before an al Shabaab court.

Although the Compass source could not confirm whether the parents heeded the command, he said they most likely did as it is not uncommon for the militants to behead those who defy their orders.

"I cannot confirm if they appeared before the Islamist court, but that is highly possible," he said. "Who can dare defy them?"

The extremists have demonstrated they have no qualms about killing those they perceive to be sympathetic to any "foreign" religion, the source said. He added that the Islamic extremists did not execute Yusuf quickly only because they had

no evidence against him except the testimony of the teenage boy.

“In Islam, to execute someone you need to have evidence of three witnesses, and they didn’t have it,” he said. “Al Shabaab is known to do whatever they like, and they don’t even follow the rules of their religion they claim adherence to.”

The discovery of Yusuf’s body brought an end to a strenuous attempt by his family to secure his release, but they are now living in fear since al Shabaab has accused them of concealing their son’s new faith.

The source said Yusuf’s death was typical of the Islamic extremist group, which often pumps bullets into their victims before dumping their bodies in public places to serve as a warning to those who dare to resist its orders.

Since the ouster of dictator Siad Barre in 1991, Somalia has been without a strong central government and has been at the mercy of vicious clan-based militants. Some, such as al Shabaab, are seeking to establish a strict version of sharia (Islamic law) as they fight to oust the Transitional Federal Government of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed that is backed by the Africa Union and Western nations.