

New Christian Convert From Islam Murdered in Somalia

Two Muslim extremists in Somalia on Monday (April 18) murdered a member of a secret Christian community in Lower Shabele region as part of a campaign to rid the country of Christianity, sources said.

An area source told Compass two al Shabaab militants shot 21-year-old Hassan Adawe Adan in Shalambod town after entering his house at 7:30 p.m.

“Two al Shabaab members dragged him out of his house, and after 10 minutes they fired several shots on him,” said an area source who requested anonymity. “He then died immediately.”

The militants then shouted “Allahu Akbar [God is greater]” before fleeing, he said.

Adan, single and living with his Muslim family, was said to have converted to Christianity several months ago. Area Christians said they suspected someone had informed the Islamic militants of his conversion. One source said that a relative who belonged to al Shabaab had told Adan’s mother that he suspected her son was a Christian.

“This incident is making other converts live in extreme fear, as the militants always keep an open eye to anyone professing the Christian faith,” the source said.

Two months ago there was heavy fighting between the rebel al Shabaab militants and forces of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), in which the TFG managed to recover some areas controlled by the rebels. Al Shabaab insurgents control much of southern and central Somalia.

With estimates of al Shabaab's size ranging from 3,000 to 7,000, the insurgents seek to impose a strict version of sharia (Islamic law), but the transitional government in Mogadishu fighting to retain control of the country treats Christians little better than the al Shabaab extremists do. While proclaiming himself a moderate, President Sheikh Sharif Sheik Ahmed has embraced a version of sharia that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

Al Shabaab was among several splinter groups that emerged after Ethiopian forces removed the Islamic Courts Union, a group of sharia courts, from power in Somalia in 2006. Said to have ties with al Qaeda, al Shabaab has been designated a terrorist organization by several western governments.

On Jan. 7, a mother of four was killed for her Christian faith on the outskirts of Mogadishu by al Shabaab militia, according to a relative. The relative, who requested anonymity, said Asha Mberwa, 36, was killed in Warbhigly village when the Islamic extremists cut her throat in front of villagers who came out of their homes as witnesses.

She is survived by her children—ages 12, 8, 6 and 4—and her husband, who was not home at the time she was apprehended. Her husband and children have fled to an undisclosed location.