

Somalian Muslim Extremists Capture, Torture Christian Convert

Al-Shabab, an al-Qaida-linked terrorist network in Somalia, has captured and tortured a Christian convert. Missing for several weeks, Hassan Gulled, age 25, is thought to be held at an al-Shabab base in Bullo Marer, Somalia.

On March 23, Gulled was seized by four al-Shabab militants who had been monitoring him for several weeks.

“Four masked, armed militia from Al Shabaab took Gulled into a Land Cruiser and then drove away as family watched him helplessly,” a source told *Morning Star News*.

On Feb. 27, Gulled traveled to Somalia to visit family, sources told *Morning Star News*. Gulled is one of many Somali refugees to risk traveling back to Somalia since a new government has been established after a series of victories by the African Union over al-Shabab.

Gulled fled Somalia in 2007 to establish a new life in Kenya. In 2010, he became a Christian, making him an ideal target for Islamic extremists in East Africa.

Al-Shabab militants in Kenya who knew of Gulled’s conversion contacted al-Shabab members in Somalia and informed them of Gulled’s new religious identity. According to *Morning Star News*’ sources, those militants then monitored Gulled for three weeks before seizing him.

“The Al Shabaab have been torturing him to see whether he would deny his Christian faith,” a source told *Morning Star News*. “Since last week, no information has surfaced concerning Gulled. There is a possibility that he could have been

killed.”

According to al-Shabab, all Somalis are born Muslims by default. Somalis found practicing another religion are considered guilty of apostasy. In Islamic Shariah, apostasy occurs when a Muslim leaves Islam for another faith. According to strict interpretations of Shariah, people guilty of apostasy should be put to death. Al-Shabab adheres to such strict interpretation, which is why they deal with apostates so harshly.

Gulled is the fourth Christian known to be attacked by al-Shabab in Somalia in the past five months. On Feb. 18, Ahmed Ali Jimale was shot by al-Shabab militants while standing outside his house in Alanley village. On Dec. 8, Mursal Isse Said was also shot outside his house by militants in Beledweyne. On Nov. 16, Farhan Haji Mose was beheaded by al-Shabab militants in Barawa after it was discovered he had converted to Christianity.

“Al-Shabab is an Islamic extremist group that has vowed to make Somalia ‘purely Islamic,’” says William Stark, International Christian Concern’s regional manager for Africa. “The group adheres to an extremely harsh interpretation of Shariah that includes the beheading of converts from Islam and the removal of hands from thieves. The group continues to terrorize Christians in both Somalia and neighboring countries.

“As more Somalis return to Somalia following the establishment of the new government, steps must be taken to protect religious minorities,” Stark continues. “More must be done to protect the small and extremely vulnerable population of Christians in Somalia. The practice of kidnapping, torturing and killing converts from Islam must be addressed by the international community and should have no place in modern society.”

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