

Somalia: Convert from Islam Shot Dead

Tuesday, 21 July 2009

NAIROBI, Kenya, July 20 (Compass Direct News) — Muslim extremists early this morning killed a Christian convert in Mahadday Weyne, Somalia, 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of Mogadishu.

Al Shabaab Islamist rebels shot Mohammed Sheikh Abdiraman to death at 7 a.m., eyewitnesses told Compass. They said the Islamic extremists appeared to have been hunting the convert from Islam, and when they found him they did not hesitate to shoot him.

The sources told Compass that Abdiraman was the leader of an underground "cell group" of Christians in Somalia.

"We are very sad about this incident, and we also are not safe," one eyewitness said by telephone. "Pray for us."

The sources were too distraught to share more details about Abdiraman's death. Another eyewitness who requested anonymity said Abdiraman had been a Christian for 15 years. He is survived by two children, ages 15 and 10. His wife died three years ago due to illness.

Intent on "cleansing" Somalia of all Christians, al Shabaab militia are monitoring converts from Islam especially where Christian workers had provided medical aid, such as Johar, Jamame, Kismayo and Beledweyne, sources said. Mahadday Weyne, 22 kilometers (14 miles) north of Johar, is the site of a former Christian-run hospital.

Linked with Islamic extremist al Qaeda terrorists, al Shabaab rebels have mounted an armed effort to topple President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's Western-backed Transitional Federal Government with the intention of imposing sharia (Islamic law). The group is already enforcing sharia in large parts of southern Somalia that they control.

The militants reportedly beheaded seven Christians on July 10, and refugees from Somalia tell of other attacks. One refugee last year recounted an attack in Lower Juba, Somalia. Binti Ali Bilal, the 40-year-old mother of 10 children, was fetching firewood with her 23-year-old daughter, Asha Ibrahim Abdalla in April 2008 in an area called Yontoy when al Shabaab members and Muslim neighbors approached them. Yontoy is 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Kismayo.

For some time the local community had suspected that she and her family were Christians, Bilal told Compass. The group asked the women if they were Christians, and when they said they were, the group began beating her and her daughter, who was six months pregnant, Bilal said.

After raping them and holding them captive for five days, the Muslim extremists left them for dead, she said, and her husband found them. The baby born to her daughter, she told Compass, suffers from diseases related to the prenatal trauma.

Reuters reported on July 10 that al Shabaab militants beheaded seven people in Baidoa that day for being Christians and "spies";

