

Some Good News from Somaliland

HARGEISA, Somaliland 5 August 2021 | A regional court in Hargeisa, Somaliland, dismissed all the charges against Christian couple, who have been held since January on charges of “apostasy” and “spreading Christianity.” The couple, and others similarly charged, were released immediately. ([Middle East Concern](#))



The charges against the Christians followed raids in January 2021 and mid-February, when police arrested the couple Mohamed and Hamdi and others. Police imprisoned Hamdi even while she was nursing, so she and her baby were kept in prison.

The final court hearing of the Christian Somalis was expected on May 22, but has been continuously delayed until now. While in prison the Christians reported poor conditions and maltreatment.

The authorities in Somaliland have been increasing their crackdown on Christians. [In December 2020](#) they arrested and then deported the another Christian Somali couple. [[Middle East Concern](#)]

Somali Christians want to see long term change -they want to be able to live as Christians in their home country. Courage like this can be compared to that of Mariam Ibraheem in Sudan. She could have easily said the Shahada (the Muslim profession of faith) and declared herself a Muslim but instead - she "appealed to Caesar" - and affirmed her right to choose religion or belief. She has shared publicly that one reason for her stand was the future of her children, she wanted to ensure they had the right to choose belief - a right the

state took from her, though their laws could never dictate her conscience. Seven years on and Sudan abolished their apostasy law and Mariam is now working to see the lingering influence of the previous apostasy law in the family laws removed.

In July 2021, Jubilee Campaign and 17 other organizations and individuals sent a letter to the members to the Human Rights Council condemning the election of Somalia to the Human Rights Council Bureau. Ironically Somalia [who has the death penalty for apostasy in several regions of the country] replaced Sudan [who recently got rid of their apostasy law]. The organizations questioned this move and called on member and observer states to place pressure on Somalia to repeal their apostasy law [which violates the fundamental right to have or adopt a religion or belief of one's choice] or forfeit their Vice President position.



Pictured: Shino and Shania Gabo - a Christian Somali couple who have started a Christian YouTube ministry for Somali Christians and seekers. They are based in the UK.

Concerns remain in Somaliland in spite of the release. The Somaliland Senate committee recently called for Sharia law to be applied in apostasy cases [which would mean the death sentence]. It is possible that the recent court decision could be breakthrough in stopping the wave of repression of Christian Somalis and exmuslims or the birthing pains of greater persecution.

Will you join us in praying that it is will mark the end, and that the crumbling of apostasy laws and penalties will be seen in the MENA region, the Horn of Africa and worldwide?

Middle East Concern shared that the release of the Christians is “expected to bring negative reactions from society.” Please pray for them – for protection, and in the longterm for the freedom of Somali Christians and other exmuslims to have the freedom to exist and practice their new religion or belief in their home country.

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