

President of Puntland state, Somalia
Said Abdullahi Deni,
Email: President@plstate.so
Twitter: @SaidAbdullahiDe

Dear President Said Abdullahi Deni,

I am writing to express concern about the continued detention of journalist **Kilwe Adan Farah**.

Kilwe Adan Farah is a freelance journalist who has been in detention in the Puntland regional state of Somalia since 27 December 2020, when he was arrested by Puntland Intelligence Agency (PISA) officers a day after he covered protests in Garowe town, in Puntland's capital, against what demonstrators said was government mismanagement of local currency. On 27 February, a military court charged him with five offences, including 'publication of false news' and 'bringing the nation or the state into contempt'. On 3 March, the same court sentenced him to three months in jail without any evidence presented to the court to substantiate the allegations- as noted by the court itself in its judgment. The court cited its discretionary powers to hold people considered to be a 'danger to national security'. The prosecution, dissatisfied with the sentencing, filed an appeal on 4 March. Kilwe Adan Farah remains held at the Garowe Central Prison.

Kilwe Adan Farah is not alone. The authorities in Somalia's Puntland regional state have escalated their attacks on media freedom by intimidating, harassing and arbitrarily arresting journalists ahead of presidential and parliamentary elections. Kilwe Adan Farah's conviction - on unfounded and politically motivated charges - is part of an effort to silence him and deter him and other journalists from carrying out their vital work, in violation of their right to freedom of expression. The decision to try him, a civilian and journalist, in a military court is also a violation of international human rights law.

In light of the above, I urge you to drop all the baseless charges against Kilwe Adan Farah and immediately and unconditionally release him from detention. I also call on you to desist from harassing and intimidating other journalists, including by subjecting them to military trials in violation of international human rights law.

Yours sincerely,