

Beat: Local

Somalia sentences allegedly raped woman and journalist covering story - UN

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USPA News - The United Nations (UN) on Tuesday voiced deep disappointment after a woman who had been allegedly raped and a journalist covering the incident were sentenced to prison in Somalia. The woman who had claimed to have been raped in September by armed men in government uniforms while living in a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs), was arrested last month, along with journalist Abdiaziz Abdinur Ibrahim who interviewed her.

A third person who introduced them both was also arrested during that time. Ibrahim was charged for offending the honor of a State institution and for filing a false report in spite of never having published his interview, while the alleged victim was charged for offending the honor of a State institution. Two other individuals have also been charged in connection with the case. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's spokesperson said he urges the Government of Somalia to ensure that "all allegations of sexual violence are investigated fully and perpetrators are brought to justice." "Above all, it is essential that the rights of the alleged victim and the journalist to a fair and transparent judicial process, including the right of appeal, are fully respected," the spokesman added. In a statement, the UN said it has repeatedly expressed alarm over reports of pervasive sexual violence in IDP camps in and around Mogadishu, which are commonly unreported because of risks to victims, witnesses and family members, as well as of intense stigmatization. The UN Political Office in Somalia (UNPOS) as well as the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, had spoken out in recent weeks about the case, urging that the alleged crimes be investigated and that a fair judicial process be ensured.

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