

Christian Convert from Islam Beheaded in Somalia
By East Africa Correspondent
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Islamic extremists accuse young man of being spy, embracing 'foreign religion.'

NAIROBI, Kenya (Morning Star News) – Islamic extremists from Somalia's rebel Al-Shabaab militants on Friday (Nov. 16) killed a Christian in Somalia's coastal city of Barawa, accusing him of being a spy and leaving Islam, Christian and Muslim witnesses said.

The extremists beheaded 25-year-old Farhan Haji Mose after monitoring his movements for six months, Christian sources said. Mose drew suspicion when he returned to Barawa, in Somalia's Lower Shebelle Region, in December 2011 after spending time in Kenya, underground Christians in Somalia told Morning Star News.

Kenya's population is nearly 83 percent Christian, according to Operation World, while Somalia's is close to 100 percent Muslim.

A crowd assembled in the coastal city on Friday morning to watch the slaughter of Mose, the sources said.

"His body was split into two, then carried away, only to be dumped near the beach of Barawa city," a Christian source who witnessed the murder told Morning Star News.

Other witnesses, Muslims, independently described the same scene. They and the Christian witness told Morning Star News that the Islamic extremists accused Mose of being a spy for foreigners and of embracing the "foreign religion of Christianity."

Loved ones of the deceased did not risk immediately recovering the body, fearing that the militants would consider them guilty by association and kill them as well. A source said a Muslim fisherman who came upon Mose's body this morning (Nov. 17) lamented, "What a brutal murder – why did the Al Shabaab kill this man? Did he deserve such a brutal death because he associated with the Christian people in Kenya?"

Mose, who had studied in Kenya, had a small cosmetics shop in Barawa and had traveled to Kenya on business last year. He converted to Christianity in 2010 while in Kenya, sources said.

"I am saddened by the death of my friend Mose," said an underground Christian who had encouraged Mose in his faith after the young man had returned from Kenya.

A leader of the underground church in Somalia also confirmed the murder.

Barawa, also called Brava, has come under control of the Al Shabaab rebels fighting the government. With a population of 545,000, the city is an international port in the Lower Shebelle Region, 113 miles (181 kilometers) southwest of the capital city of Mogadishu.

Al Shabaab rebels have killed dozens of Christian converts from Islam since embarking on a campaign to rid Somalia of Christianity. The insurgents, variously estimated at 3,000 to 7,000, seek to impose a stricter version of sharia (Islamic law) on Somalia.

The transitional government in Mogadishu proclaims itself moderate, but it too has embraced a version of sharia that mandates the death penalty for those who leave Islam.

Designated a terrorist organization by several Western governments, Al Shabaab was one of several splinter groups that arose after Ethiopian forces toppled the Islamic Courts Union from power in Somalia in 2006.

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