

Somali journalist shot, seriously wounded: officials

Gunmen shot and seriously wounded a Somali journalist in the volatile southern port city of Kismayo, officials and colleagues said Thursday [30 May 2013], the latest in a string of attacks against the media.

Unidentified attackers shot Abdikadir Abdirasak Sofe - also known by his nickname 'Jijile', a reporter for London-based Royal TV - as he walked home after work late on Wednesday.

"Two men, one of them armed with an AK-47, opened fire," said Ali Mohamed, a witness.

The reporter, who reportedly had several bullet wounds to his upper body, was rushed to hospital. Two men were later arrested for the assassination attempt, but it was not immediately clear what their motive had been, said Mohamed Saleban, a Somali military official in Kismayo.

Somalia is one of the most dangerous places for journalists, with at least 18 media workers killed last year.

"We condemn the shooting of our colleague in the strongest terms possible," said Mohamed Ibrahim, from the National Union of Somali Journalists.

The attack on Sofe follows the murder of at least four reporters this year.

Somalia has been ravaged by conflict since 1991, but a new UN-backed government took power last year.

However, the attack on Sofe took place in the southern Somali port of Kismayo, under the control of a self-declared regional "president", who is allied to Kenyan troops with the African Union force in the region.

Al-Qaeda linked Shebab insurgents were driven from Kismayo last year by Kenyan and allied Somali forces, but still regularly stage attacks on the city.

However, multiple rival clan militia forces also operate in the southern Jubaland region vying for control.

Source: AFP