

Somali radio station raided by government

by UPI

MOGADISHU, Somalia - An independent radio station in Somalia was raided and ransacked by government forces Sunday, station officials said. At least 17 people were killed in Mogadishu Saturday in fighting between Ethiopian-backed Somali government troops and insurgents, Garowe Online reported Sunday. Another 20 were wounded, the online news agency said. It was not clear how many of the casualties were from each side.

The Somali troops were supported by artillery and tanks, which were used to pound the city's Bakara market where the fighting erupted. Human rights groups estimate 6,500 people were killed in Mogadishu last year and hundreds of thousands of civilians displaced by the insurgency, which is in its 15th month. Government officials said they were unaware of the Shabelle Radio station raid, CNN reported. The radio station posted a statement on its Web site, charging that officers forcibly entered the facility, broke equipment and took out Director Mukhtar Mohamed Hiraabe at gunpoint. The station has been a target of government forces in the past for its reporting about Somalia's armed conflict, CNN reported. The acting manager of the station was killed by a gunman in his Mogadishu home last October.

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