

## Kenyan youth get training for war in Somalia

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(GIN) – Kenyan officials have confirmed that Kenyan youth of Somali origin are secretly being recruited and trained to fight on behalf of the Transitional Federation Government of Somalia, in another sign of the regionalization of troubles in the African Horn.

One senior government official said he learned that 42 youths from his district had been recruited but were intercepted before reaching boot camp for training.

Sharmarke Abdi, one recruited Kenyan youth, in a press interview, said he escaped after two weeks of training alongside hundreds of youths from both Kenya and Somalia.

"We were told that the United Nations was supporting the recruitment. We were transported in government vehicles. We began training immediately. Some of the trainers were from Somalia," he said.

Habiba Kosar, one of numerous parents in northeastern Kenya raising the alarm, said her 18-year-old son, Mohammed, was recruited and is being trained as a soldier at a Kenyan government security facility.

"My son was picked in the middle of the night. He is being trained for Somalia. We have never seen Somalia and have no connection with the country. I just want my son back," she said.

Government officials acknowledge training Somali citizens to return home and fight on the side of the U.S.-backed central government which is being overwhelmed by fundamentalist armies such as Al-Shabaab. Foreign Affairs minister Moses Wetang'ula is later expected to appear before the committee to explain the source of funding for the training.

According to Internal Security secretary Francis Kimemia, more than 2,000 youths had been trained by Kenya on behalf of Somalia, but stressed that it would be against the agreement to train Kenyans. "We cannot train Kenyan youth to go fight in Somalia. That would be against the agreement we have with their government. Ideally, we should have taken them to court," he said.