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UN Representative for Somalia pays tribute to media and calls for press freedom to be protected and respected

Mogadishu, 3 May 2014 – As World Press Freedom Day is celebrated across the globe today, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia (SRSG), Nicholas Kay, paid tribute to Somali journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty. He called for the freedom of the press to be protected and respected by all and commended the vibrant and growing media sector in Somalia.

“Somalia is emerging from decades of conflict, but it remains one of most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist. A vigorous, independent and diverse press is vital. Journalists have an important role to play as Somalis tackle an ambitious agenda of state and peace building. A free press gives people access to the information they need to make critical choices in their lives. It raises awareness of issues affecting them, their families and their communities and it helps people to hold authorities to account for their actions.

“I pay tribute to Somalia’s brave journalists who have lost their lives or have been attacked in the line of duty. We have seen a significant reduction in attacks against journalists in recent years, but much more needs to be done. Press freedom remains fragile in Somalia and must be protected.” SRSG Kay added.

“I welcome the consultations between Somalia’s media community and the Federal Government to finalise a new media law. This law will be an important step in building respect for the fundamental principles of press freedom. The new law should empower journalists to make a vital contribution to peace and stability in Somalia.”

Note to correspondents: 18 media workers were killed in Somalia in 2012 and 7 in 2013 (data from National Union of Somali Journalists)

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