

**SECTION:** HOME NEWS

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**HEADLINE:** FAMILY WIN DAMAGES FOR MURDER OF FATHER

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**BODY:**

The family of a man who was shot dead in cold blood by the followers of a Somali militia leader was today awarded £10,000 High Court damages.

The sum was to compensate Zahra Abdullah, the widow of Ahmed Mahmud Mohamed, and her four children for their bereavement following Mr Mohamed's death in August 2002.

Somali-born Mr Mohamed, an accountant, came to the UK as a refugee and became a British citizen in 1998.

He returned to Puntland, in the north east of Somalia, in February 2000 and was elected to the position of **Sultan** of his sub clan.

He was critical of **Abdullahi Yusuf**, whose term as president of Puntland ended in June 2001 but who remained in power assisted by his own armed militia.

Mr Justice Treacy, sitting in London, said that on the day of his death, Mr Mohamed was driving with two passengers to visit relatives in the village of Kala-Beyr in north east Somalia.

He was passed by Yusuf who was part of an armoured column of up to 400 gunmen travelling in the opposite direction.

After the column had passed Mr Mohamed, it stopped and two vehicles from the convoy, armed with heavy machine guns, chased him to the nearby village.

Their occupants found him outside his aunt's house, surrounded him and shot him "in cold blood" while leaving his passengers unharmed.

The judge said that there was evidence from the Home Office that Yusuf was head of the armed militia involved in the civil war, that he retained the presidency by force and that the political and constitutional situation in Puntland was one of crisis and violence in consequence of his actions.

There was evidence that he had met challenges to his claim to the presidency with

violence and lethal force, and that his supporters had carried out retaliation against political opponents.

"It appears that the defendant regarded the deceased as somebody who was an insurrectionist against his regime and his power base in Puntland.

"The evidence does not show that the defendant was personally responsible for the killing of the deceased but it appears that the killing was carried out by those acting under his authority and command."

The UK proceedings on behalf of Mrs Mohamed and the couple's two sons and two daughters, aged between seven and 16, were brought after a senior High Court official ruled that the English courts did have jurisdiction in the case.

Today, the judge entered judgment for the family, of Australia Road, Hammersmith, west London, after striking out the defence case on the basis of failure to supply documents to the court.

He awarded a sum of £10,000 for bereavement plus £20,000 in costs against Yusuf, who was not present or represented. It was not clear if the judgment would ever be capable of being enforced.

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