



Advocacy
Brief

The Sacdiya Bajaaj Case

An Overview of Legal and Civic Concerns



Follow Us:
balqiis insights

1. Overview of the Case

The case of Sadia Moalim Ali, known to the Somali public as Sacdiya Bajaaj, has grown into a matter of genuine national concern, drawing the attention of ordinary citizens, legal professionals, and institutions alike.

It touches on some of the most basic questions a society can ask of its justice system: how arrests are carried out, how long a person may be held before trial, what standard of evidence a prosecution must meet, and whether ordinary people remain free to speak their minds without fear. At its heart, this is a test of due process and of public confidence in the rule of law.



2. Who She Is

Sacdiya is a nursing graduate, a tuk-tuk driver, a social activist, and an outspoken public commentator. By the accounts that have appeared in the press, she is also the main provider for her family, including her eleven-month-old daughter.

Much of what has drawn Somalis to her story is its ordinariness. She is not a politician or a public official. She is a working woman who chose to speak about the issues affecting her community, and that is precisely why her treatment has resonated so widely.



3. The Arrest in Mogadishu

On 12 April 2026, Sacdiya was arrested in Mogadishu by officers of the National Intelligence Agency. She was first held at Hamar Jajab Police Station and then transferred to Mogadishu Central Prison on 14 April 2026.





Advocacy
Brief

4. Pre-Trial Detention

She would remain in detention for more than seventy days before the court delivered its verdict. For a case rooted in public expression, a detention of this length raises real and legitimate questions about proportionality, timely access to legal remedy, and the safeguards that are meant to protect every citizen before guilt is ever established.



Follow Us:
balqiis insights

5. Human Rights and Public Interest Concerns

On 24 April 2026, Amnesty International issued an urgent action calling for Sacdiya's immediate and unconditional release. The organisation linked her detention to her activism, her social media activity, and her participation in peaceful protest, and warned that the case carried troubling implications for freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and the civic space that citizens depend on to hold power to account.

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



6. Court Proceedings

The matter was heard before the Banadir Regional Court, which weighed the allegations brought by the prosecution. The court ultimately framed its ruling around Article 269 of the Somali Penal Code, placing the case within a wider and still unsettled debate about the limits of public speech, criminal liability, and the right to take part in civic life.



7. The Ruling and the Defence Position

On 25 June 2026, the Banadir Regional Court convicted Sacdiya under Article 269 of the Somali Penal Code and sentenced her to three years in prison.

Her legal team has said it will appeal. One of her lawyers, Avv. Mohamed Sheikh, argued that the requirements of Article 269(2) were never properly established, and that the Attorney General's Office failed to bring forward sufficient evidence to support the charge.



8. Why This Case Matters

The significance of Sacdiya's case reaches well beyond one woman or one verdict. Civic space, the room for citizens to speak, question, organise, and take part in public life, is the foundation on which public trust and accountable government are built. When that space narrows, the loss is felt by everyone, not only by those who are silenced.

A society is healthiest when its people can criticise without fear and disagree without danger. Protecting the voice of the ordinary citizen is how a nation safeguards the trust between the governed and those who govern, and how it avoids repeating the mistakes of those who chose silence over scrutiny.





Advocacy
Brief

9. A Call to Action

Balqiis Insights calls on civil society organisations, legal professionals, human rights bodies, media institutions, and concerned citizens to stand behind a fair, transparent, and rights-respecting appeal.

This is not only about a single verdict. It is about the wider questions the case raises: the protection of civic space, the freedom to express oneself, the right of women to take a full and visible part in public life, the conditions in which detainees are held, and the due process owed to every person who comes before a court.

Insight. Action. Change.