

## Released Canadian, Australian journalists to fly to Kenya

A Canadian journalist and an Australian photographer freed after 15 months of captivity in Somalia were Thursday due to fly to Nairobi, the capital of neighbouring Kenya.

Canadian journalist Amanda Lindhout and Australian photographer Nigel Brennan were set free Wednesday night and stayed overnight in a Mogadishu hotel.

'They were released last night,' Dahir Mohamoud Gelle, Somalia's information minister said. 'They are in good condition right now, but imagine how someone who has been in prison for over a year can feel... they are very tired.'

In a telephonic interview with Canada's CTV News, Lindhout said that a ransom was paid by the families to secure their release.

Unconfirmed reports suggested a figure of around \$1 million was handed over to armed militia.

Lindhout said that she and Brennan were moved from house to house and kept apart.

'I was kept by myself at all times. I had no one to speak to. I was normally kept in a room with a light, no window, I had nothing to write on or with. There was very little food. I was allowed to use the toilet exactly five times a day,' she said.

Somalia has been without an effective central government since 1991 and is currently in the grip of a bloody Islamist insurgency. Criminal gangs and insurgents regularly kidnap journalists and aid workers.

Lindhout and Brennan were taken just outside Mogadishu in August 2008 as they researched a story on internally displaced persons.

Hundreds of thousands of Somalis, fleeing almost daily battles in the capital, have set up camp outside the city.

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