



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on July 12, 2010

Somali Terrorist Group Al-Shabab Claims Responsibility for Kampala, Uganda Bombings

Somali Islamic militants from al-Shabab have claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks at two sites in Uganda's capital of Kampala, killing at least 74 and leaving dozens wounded.



While fans watched the World Cup game between Spain and the Netherlands, the first blast occurred at the Ethiopian Village-theme restaurant at 10:55 p.m. according to a Ugandan government spokesman, with two more blasts happening 20 minutes later at the Kampala rugby club. Suspicion first fell on al-Shabab when, at one of the blast sites, the severed head of an apparent Somali suicide bomber was discovered by investigators. It is the first time al-Shabab has executed any attacks outside of Somalia itself. It follows a call two days earlier from one of al-Shabab's commanders for attacks to be made in Uganda and Burundi, which both supply troops to the peacekeeping force "African Union" that supports the fragile, U.N.-backed Somali government. Responsibility was claimed by Sheik Ali Mohamud Rage a militant spokesman in Mogadishu, who said, "We will carry out attacks against our enemy wherever they are. No one will deter us from performing our Islamic duty."

An early [Associated Press report](#) stated:

Blood and pieces of flesh littered the floor among overturned chairs at the scenes of the blasts, which went off as people watched the game between Spain and the Netherlands. The attack on the rugby club, where crowds sat outside watching a large-screen TV, left 49 dead, police said. Fifteen others were killed in the restaurant explosion.

"We were enjoying ourselves when a very noisy blast took place," said Andrew Oketa, one of the hospitalized survivors. "I fell down and became unconscious. When I regained, I realized that I was in a hospital bed with a deep wound on my head."

Several Americans from a Pennsylvania church group were wounded in the restaurant attack including Kris Sledge, 18, of Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. He said from a hospital bed afterward



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that he was “just glad to be alive.”

Florence Naiga, 32, a mother of three children, said her husband had gone to watch the World Cup final at the rugby club.

“He did not come back. I learnt about the bomb blasts in the morning. When I went to police they told me he was among the dead,” she said.

Invisible Children, a San Diego, California-based aid group that helps child soldiers, identified the dead American as one of its workers, Nate Henn, who was killed on the rugby field. Henn, 25, was a native of Wilmington, Delaware.

At least 10 of the dead are thought to be Ethiopian or Eritrean.

Al-Shabab has carried out many suicide bombings in Somalia itself. Some of its members are veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and also include at least two recruited from Somali communities in the United States. The [U.K.'s Telegraph](#) explained, “Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia in 2006 to oust an Islamist movement from Mogadishu. That sparked the Islamist insurgency which still rages.”

At this time, army spokesman Felix Kulayigve said a military response was still uncertain, while Ugandan President Museveni stated that terrorists should fight soldiers and not people who are just enjoying themselves. He asserted, “We shall go for them wherever they are coming from. We will look for them and get them as we always do.” Somalia’s own President condemned the attack as “barbaric.” A White House spokesman said President Obama “was deeply saddened by the loss of life resulting from these deplorable and cowardly attacks,” and that the United States was ready to provide any assistance necessary to the government of Uganda.

Sheikh Yusuf Issa, an al-Shabab commander in Mogadishu, Somalia, told the AP Monday, “Uganda is one of our enemies. Whatever makes them cry, makes us happy. May Allah’s anger be upon those who are against us.”

He also stated regarding the bombings: “Uganda is a major infidel country supporting the so-called government of Somalia. We know Uganda is against Islam and so we are very happy at what has happened in Kampala. That is the best news we ever heard.”

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