

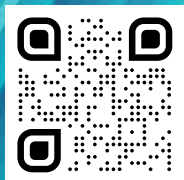


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MONITOR



MARCH 2022

SOMALIA

25TH MARCH 2022

SHABAAB TARGETS SOMALI POLICE CHIEF IN MOGADISHU SUICIDE BOMBING

On the evening of April 22, Shabaab, al Qaeda's branch in East Africa, struck a popular restaurant in Lido Beach in Mogadishu in an attempt to assassinate the chief of the Somali Police Force, Abdi Hassan Mohamed Hijaar. The police commander was accompanied by 11 members of the Somali Parliament at the time of the attack.

Local reporters describe the attack as "complex" as the terrorist organization conducted a suicide bombing of the crowded restaurant, then followed the explosion with an assault by gunmen. Hijaar, along with several other Somali government officials, were breaking their Ramadan fast at the restaurant at the time of the attack.

Shabaab frequently employs the tactic of suicide assaults,

especially upon popular hotels in Mogadishu, using the shock and chaos created by the suicide bombing to enable its gunmen to then enter the fray.

According to local sources, Hijaar and other Somali government officials were unharmed in the assault, indicating that Shabaab failed to accomplish its objective. However, at least 6 people, all civilians, were killed in the attack. Local officials stated at least another 7 people were also injured.

Shabaab was quick to claim the suicide bombing via its Shahada News Agency and local radio stations. According to the jihadist group, it was specifically targeting "the grouping of apostate government officials" at the restaurant.

According to data compiled by FDD's Long War Journal, Friday's

blast marks the group's 12th successful or attempted suicide bombing so far this year. The vast majority of these have occurred inside Mogadishu.

Shabaab further stated it "killed and wounded 44 people," including an alleged government official, though the group routinely inflates the casualty numbers of its attacks. Local media has also denied that any government personnel were injured.

Shabaab often uses suicide bombings in its political assassinations. For instance, the group killed Somali lawmaker Amina Mohamed Abdi in a suicide bombing in central Somalia last month. Last year, it also attempted to assassinate the governor of Somalia's Bay region in a similar blast. While in 2020, two regional governors, of Puntland's Nugaal and Mudug regions, were killed by Shabaab's suicide bombers.

TARGETING SOMALIA'S ELECTION PROCESS

Friday's suicide assault once again demonstrates that Mogadishu is not safe from insurgent attacks. Shabaab continues to attempt to undermine the federal government by illustrating its inability to protect its population and secure its territory. In this regard, Friday's suicide bombing was just the latest in a recent series of attacks.

On Monday, Shabaab claimed credit for a mortar attack on the Somali parliament building in Mogadishu. Though no one was killed in the attack, at least six were injured. The attack occurred while the newly elected parliamentarians were approving procedures for electing the speakers.

The mortar blasts, like the consecutive strikes at the end of March, represent yet another Shabaab attempt to undermine the Somali election process. Friday's suicide assault can also be seen within the context of Shabaab's attempts at disrupting the process.

SOURCE.

https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2022/Apr/185957/shabaab_targets_somali_police_chief_in_mogadishu_suicide_bombing.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

ABDIRIZAK OMAR: VILLA HARGEISA TOO DANGEROUS TO HOLD PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKERSHIP ELECTIONS

24TH MARCH 2022

Mogadishu (HOL) - The chairman of the committee organizing the election for Lower House Speaker, Abdirizak Omar Mohamed, says the election of the parliamentary Speaker would not take place inside the presidential palace in the capital, citing security concerns.

The committee chairman said the air conditioner for the parliament building had been hit by gunfire, releasing intense heat that made the

assembly unbearable.

He added that the committee had made a concerted effort to replace the air conditioners so as not to delay the candidates' speeches for the Speaker of the House of the People.

"I couldn't say whether it was intentional or caused by a stray bullet," Abdirizak said. "When we arrived at the compound, we were told that a bullet had hit the air conditioner, and the next day a mortar shell hit the parliament building." He added.

A week ago, at least nine people were injured after several mortar shells hit the parliament building where the newly elected lawmakers held a joint session.

The mortar shelling happened a few minutes after the lawmakers approved measures to hold elections for the House of the People and Senate speakers on April 26 and 27.

Al Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the latest attack, saying it was targeting the lawmakers.

ETHIOPIA

MARCH 2022

GUTERRES WELCOMES TIGRAY HUMANITARIAN CEASEFIRE

The UN chief on Friday welcomed the declaration of an indefinite humanitarian truce on the part of the Ethiopian Government, and the commitment by forces in the Tigray

region to comply with the immediate ceasefire, amid deep concern for the five million people who need emergency aid there.

SOURCE

Al Jazeera- <https://www.aljazeera.com/>

SOUTH SUDAN

MARCH 2022

ABUSES BY SOUTH SUDAN GOVERNMENT AMOUNTS TO WAR CRIMES

UN human rights body highlights names of 142 individuals who warrant an investigation for a 'range of crimes' under international law. Members of South Sudan's government committed human rights violations "amounting to war crimes" in the country's southwest, the UN has said, including for abuses against children. The report described grave rights abuses, ranging from mass rapes and sexual slavery of women to the deliberate killing of dozens of children, including at least one

infant who was beaten to death by soldiers in front of his mother. "The notion that the localised violence is not linked to the State or to national-level conflicts, as suggested by the Government and South Sudanese military elites, is a fallacy," Sooka said. "These localised killings, massacres, torture, abductions, detentions, looting, burning of villages, and forced displacement, as well as the rape, and sexual violence, are a reflection of the intense political contestation for power ... at a national level."

RUMORS OF TENSION REPORTED IN JUBA

There have been rumors of war in order to extend the transitional government period. The president dismissed the rumors in a press conference on the 28th of March saying the deployment of security forces in town was meant to deter suspected criminals in tending to cause insecurity in the

residential areas where senior government officials reside. The president further said he is open to dialogue following their withdrawal from the security arrangement mechanism meeting. This followed the First Vice President's statement to international communities that raised concerns about the

deployment of SSPDF soldiers around his residential area and the city at large. He claimed that it caused unnecessary tension and panic to the citizens and creates doubts nationally which reflects very poorly on the commitment of the parties to resolve issues peacefully.

CONFLICTS BETWEEN CATTLE KEEPERS AND FARMERS IN MAGWI

The influx of cattle in trucks to Magwi county has sparked a conflict between the two communities. The governor of Eastern Equatoria, Louis Lobong urged the cattle keepers to respect the local cultures and stay in peace with the local communities or return safely to their homelands. The cattle keepers, had travelled in large numbers in search for

pastures and water for their cattle and said they would head back to their states on the onset of the rainy season. However, the destruction of the farmlands by the cattle have sparked violence and friction between the communities leading to harassment, arrests, rape and murdering of innocent lives by the cattle keepers as a result of thousands of cattle being raided. At least 17,000 people

were camped in Magwi town after fleeing the insecurity caused by the roaming herders. Towards the end of the month, some cattle keepers were reported to have returned to their states but others have not complied to the direct orders of the president.

WAR OF WORDS AS TROOPS LEAVE SOUTH SUDAN VP'S HOME

MARCH 2022

The president of South Sudan has defended the deployment of dozens of heavily armed troops around the residence of the First

Vice-President Riek Machar. Salva Kiir described it as "normal practice", designed to protect the former rebel leader. Mr Machar condemned the move, saying it

"creates doubt" that the fragile peace process can succeed. He has accused government forces of attacking his positions in Upper Nile and Unity states, in the north

of the country, in recent weeks. The United Nations has urged the two sides to negotiate to try to stop South Sudan sliding back into full civil war. Soldiers had encircled Mr Machar's house from Sunday evening until Monday, after he rejected President Kiir's directive on the formation of a national army. It's a key part of the peace deal the pair signed in 2018 following five years of civil war. But progress been hampered

by mistrust among political leaders, inter-communal fighting and insecurity - and tensions are high as the country prepares for a general election next year. South Sudanese security forces on Monday morning withdrew from First Vice-President Riek Machar's residence in the capital, Juba, his office has told the BBC. Security officers cordoned off Mr Machar's house after he had issued a press statement rejecting

President Salva Kiir's directive on the formation of a national army - a key pillar of a peace deal the pair signed in 2018. Mr Machar had accused President Kiir of not equally sharing out positions in the military and the police force as stipulated in the peace deal. "The unilateral decision by President Kiir is a violation of the revitalised peace agreement and is a clear rejection of the ongoing mediation process," he said.

SOURCE.

South Sudan BBC News- <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c302m85q54lt/south-sudan>

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