

Ugandans to the rescue



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Posted by Musa

Twin blasts in Uganda capital Kampala kill at least 50



The blasts went off as people were watching the World Cup final

At least 50 people, including an American, have been killed in twin blast in the Ugandan capital Kampala.

It is not known what caused the blasts, which police said went off at a rugby club and at a restaurant as football fans watched the World Cup final.

"These bombs were definitely targeting World Cup crowds," Inspector General of Police Kale Kayihura said.

Somali militants have in the past threatened to attack Kampala; Ugandan troops are deployed in Mogadishu.

About 5,000 African Union troops from Uganda and Burundi are based in Mogadishu to protect the fragile interim government.

The Amisom force is engaged in frequent firefights with Islamist insurgents which control much of southern and central Somalia.

Obama 'deeply saddened'

Insp General Kayihura said he believed Somalia's militant group al-Shabab could be behind the attack. If true, it would be the first time the group has carried out attacks outside Somalia.

In Mogadishu, an al-Shabab commander said he was "happy" with the attacks in Uganda.

But Sheik Yusuf Sheik Issa refused to confirm or deny that al-Shabab was responsible.

Help is on the way

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Joshua Mmali,
BBC News, Kampala

People are nervous and scared. They are running home and telling their relatives, and telling them to stay indoors.

In the rugby club, where the biggest crowd had gathered, the explosion occurred right in the middle of the crowd. People who were seated in the outer parts of the crowd were not affected as much as those seated in the middle.

The police are saying they tried to put in place as much security as they could, but it seems clear that the police had no clue about how the bombs got in those places.

Nobody expected this to happen in a World Cup final. One would have thought that whoever did this would have waited for another time. It is just a time when people are making merry and very excited about the World Cup final, then this happens. It is quite shocking.

He told AP news agency: "Uganda is one of our enemies. Whatever makes them cry, makes us happy. May Allah's anger be upon those who are against us."

Insp General Kayihura, speaking at the scene of one blast, said:

"The information we have indicates the people who have attacked the Ethiopian Village were probably targeting expatriates," he added.

US President Barack Obama said the explosions were "deplorable and cowardly".

US National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer said in a statement: "The president is deeply saddened by the loss of life resulting from these deplorable and cowardly attacks, and sends his condolences to the people of Uganda and the loved ones of those who have been killed or injured.

"The United States is ready to provide any assistance requested by the Ugandan government."

The US embassy in Kampala has confirmed that one American was among the dead.

'Screaming and running'

At least three Americans, members of a church group from Pennsylvania, were wounded at the Ethiopian restaurant.

One, Kris Sledge, 18, said from his hospital bed: "I remember blacking out, hearing people screaming and running."

Mr Sledge, of Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, who had a bandaged leg and burns on his face, told AP: "I love the place here, but I'm wondering why this happened and who did this. At this point we're just glad to be alive."

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At the scenes of the two blasts chairs were overturned, and blood and pieces of flesh lay on the floor.

Are you in Kampala? Did you witness the explosions? Send us your eyewitness accounts using the form below.