

Somalia's President Narrowly Escapes Al-Shabaab Bomb Attack; Media Station Briefly Shutdown, Dozen Journalists Arrested

By: *Ali Yusuf* | 18 March 2025 23:32

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MOGADISHU, Somalia (HORN OBSERVER) – Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud narrowly survived a bomb attack on Tuesday after his convoy was targeted by a massive explosive, killing several of his bodyguards and civilians, including an online journalist, in the Ceelgaabta neighborhood of Mogadishu.

The attack occurred while the government briefly shut down a prominent radio station, **Risaala Media**, and detained 22 journalists who reported the incident.

Witnesses said the bomb, planted on the roadside beneath a two-storey building, detonated as the president's convoy passed a security checkpoint. One of the vehicles in the presidential entourage was severely damaged, and nearby buildings partially collapsed due to the blast.

At least 10 people, including several of the president's guards, were confirmed dead.

Journalist Mohamed Abukar Dabaashe **was killed** in the attack, as confirmed by the Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS).

The attack occurred as President Mohamud was en route to the frontlines to coordinate clan militias and government forces against the advancing Al-Shabaab militant group, which has been moving closer to Mogadishu.

Al-Shabaab quickly claimed responsibility for the attack, raising concerns over the group's ability to carry out such a bold assault on the president's convoy amid ongoing intelligence shortcomings within the Somali government.

Following the attack, Somalia's National Security Advisor Hussein Sheikh Ali confirmed via X that "The president is safe and on travel to oversee the offensive against Shabaab in the regions by the Somali National Army."



PHOTO: The attack occurred as President Mohamud was en route to the frontlines to coordinate clan militias and government forces against the advancing Al-Shabaab militant group, which has been moving closer to Mogadishu.

In a statement, the Somali Ministry of Information said militants targeted the president's convoy while he was en route to join troops on the frontlines.

The UK Embassy in Mogadishu **condemned** the attack, calling it a "cowardly act." On X, they expressed their condolences, stating: "We condemn today's cowardly attack on the President's convoy in Mogadishu – our condolences are with all who lost a loved one & the wounded. The UK remains a steadfast partner to the Somali Government as they fight the violent extremists behind this despicable attack."

Meanwhile, armed police officers led by their commander, Abdi Ali, forcibly entered Risaala Media's station in Mogadishu's Hamar Jajab district on Tuesday afternoon. They ordered the station off-air and arrested all five journalists present, according to SJS.

The radio station resumed operations later in the day, and the journalists were freed.

Before the raid on Risaala Media, Somali police detained 17 journalists covering the bombing at the scene. The journalists were taken to Hamar Jajab police station, where their footage was deleted before their release.

The attack comes after a U.S. Embassy security alert on March 4, which warned of potential imminent attacks in Somalia, including on Mogadishu's Aden Adde International Airport.

Additionally, the U.S. Embassy in Kenya announced on February 27 that it would halt the use of the airport for official U.S. Embassy travelers.



PHOTO: On Friday, Al-Shabaab overran the Somali army base in Awdheegle, seizing a significant cache of weapons, including mortars and anti-aircraft machine-guns.

Al-Shabaab, the Al-Qaeda-linked militant group, has intensified its violent campaign and vowed to capture Mogadishu before June.

In February and March, the group seized several key towns and rural areas in the Middle Shabelle and Hiiraan regions, positioning itself closer to Mogadishu.

On Friday, Al-Shabaab overran the Somali army base in Awdheegle, seizing a significant cache of weapons, including mortars and anti-aircraft machine-guns.

Early Tuesday, the militants took control of residential areas in northern Mogadishu, advancing toward Balcad, about 30 kilometers from the capital. They also extended their influence over the Afgoye-Mogadishu road.