

# Bombings in Uganda raise further concern for security and counterterrorist measures in neighbouring Kenya

[blogs.lse.ac.uk/waronterror/2010/07/13/bombings-in-uganda-raise-further-concern-for-security-and-counterterrorist-measures-in-neighbouring-kenya/](http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/waronterror/2010/07/13/bombings-in-uganda-raise-further-concern-for-security-and-counterterrorist-measures-in-neighbouring-kenya/)

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Al-Shabaab child soldier © raxanreeb.com

Sunday, 11 July, as people watched the World Cup finals, twin blasts shook the Ugandan capital city Kampala, killing 74 people. This recent attack on civilians has been blamed on Al-Shabaab, a radical Islamist group increasingly at the center of a worsening security situation playing out in the East and Horn of Africa region.

The Al-Shabaab “insurgency” has been predominantly linked with nearby Somalia, where they have weakened the authority of the Mogadishu-based Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Al-Shabaab’s open identification with Al-Qaeda has been particularly worrying to Kenya, neighbouring countries and American efforts in the fight against terrorism. As recently as January 2010, Al-Shabaab threatened to attack Kenya and Western interests in the region. Recent bombings in Uganda will no doubt only raise further concerns.

The Obama Administration continues, like its predecessor, to provide diplomatic and military support to the Somali TFG, even though this has not proved effective in stabilizing Somalia. In fact, the United States has stepped up its counterterrorism operations in Somalia, authorizing its Special Forces to carry out pre-emptive strikes on Al-Shabaab targets. Besides military operations, the United States is pursuing “soft” measures which include funding youth employment programs at the Kenyan coast where it claims youth are most vulnerable to recruitment into terrorism. The US government looks to Kenya for cooperation in its counter-terrorism operations but this poses dilemmas for Kenya.

## Dilemmas in US-Kenya counterterrorism cooperation

The Kenyan government is particularly distressed about what it claims is Al-Shabaab’s growing role in illegal arms proliferation in the region. Kenya’s President Mwai Kibaki recently requested visiting US Vice



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