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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

SOUTH AFRICA :

Is it time for the settlers to finally leave South Africa?

22 September 2013/news24.com

A lot of South Africans today make it their own personal pastime to complain about the government. Perhaps they are corrupt and resting on their laurels, perhaps they are inefficient and misguided but more than anything else I think South Africa's problem is not its governance but its ourselves. The ideals fought for in the struggle against Apartheid have changed, the dreams and hopes of our Apartheid struggle heroes for a truly African nation have muddled into this beehive of bitterness and complacency. Rather than all of us sitting around the fire reciting inspirational stories of our heritage to those of different creeds, we are still separated by invisible walls of culture and belief. We like to blame apartheid, or the ANC, or the Boers, or the conniving Englishman, or communism but our problem is rooted in what we are made from. The new South Africa has become both defined and confined by its diversity and we live today, as before, a nation divided into groups of individuals. South Africa has so many different types of arrow in its quiver that, to my mind, it seems inconceivable that even the most skilled of bowman could shoot each of these to hit their mark. Is this the failing of government or is South Africa simply too diverse to have a single national identity to drive us forward to success? I am losing faith and I question what I am and what we are collectively, those who are born here. What is it to be South African, is there a hope?

I look at the United Kingdom and ask myself this same question. You have the proud, inventive Scots who hate the English, a nation of tea and scones and cricketers, you have the Welsh, a depressed bunch who like to sing (really well), the Northern Irish (I don't know the stereotype here but they British nonetheless). Thrown into this then you have the Manx from the Isle of Man, the Channel Islanders of Guernsey and Jersey and it really does start becoming a rather confusing mess. At the end of the day though they all speak the same language, fly the Union Jack, sing the same national anthem and bestow upon themselves this mighty title "British". Sure, a country that has a checkered, bloody history of its own, for some the scourge of the world through its imperialistic avarice but at the end of the day a country with an identity that acknowledges all of its history from the Romans and the Celts to the modern day. An inclusive nation where everyone can have a voice. A man (or woman) from Aberdeen in the North could have a conversation with a man from Taunton in the south about anything from the weather to Miley Cyrus and they would be guaranteed to understand each other. As divided a nation as it can be at times whether it be in terms of politics or the colour of your skin or your religious beliefs, if you bring a group of people together they do have the potential to communicate with each and work together. Language is the ultimate unifier and this is South Africa's shortcoming.

If you bring together 4 people, one from Glenwood in Durban, one from Orania, one from Butterworth in the Eastern Cape and one from Rural Ulundi, you could potentially have 4 people here none of whom speak the language of any of the other. How is a country such as this ever going to unite to work towards a common goal if they can't speak the same language? Belief in the human spirit should certainly never, ever be discounted but how can a nation focus on and achieve its goals if the very means by which we have evolved to relate to each other are too far separated and diluted to ever achieve any level of meaning? We all know the South African education system is never going to teach 45 million people English. We are always going to be stuck in a situation where 3 participants in a meeting break into Zulu over an issue which they feel they can best express in their mother tongue much to the frustration of the rest of the room.

South Africa will never truly become the all inclusive African nation it aspires to be unless we remove these barriers. These barriers are unfortunately a legacy of our past and it is each of our own cultural legacy and ancestral roots that hold us back from moving forward. A lot of South Africans are still stuck in either a colonial or a struggle mentality. I, personally, am happy in my colonial

bubble I don't want to change and become a member of this new South Africa. I don't want to learn Zulu or Afrikaans, I don't want to watch Zola-7. Ultimately, as an English-speaking South African, I don't feel I have a voice anymore, or an opinion, or a vote that counts. I don't want to be a part of this new South Africa and it's not that I don't love the country or its people, or its beauty, or its sport or its warmth. It's that I feel that colonial Africa has had its day and that I, as a relic of this system, have run the course of my stay. It's really time for Africa to become African and the new world power and it's not going to achieve that with a portion of the population who, for whatever reason, don't buy into this dream. I really want to go back to England now, having said all this. I want to rediscover my roots and go back to where I feel I belong, having been there a number of times of the years. Unfortunately with the complication of visas, work permits and the South African passport this isn't a reality.

I now feel a bit like an orphan of history having lost my English motherland because my ancestry doesn't quite meet the black and white UK immigration rules that are arbitrary but necessary! I'm glad that Africans can now truly determine the fate of their own nation and people and which, with time, will slowly be realised, be patient. However as the government seeks to return the rights of the land back to the indigenous peoples should it not also be engaging with those former colonial powers to repatriate those former citizens who now find themselves stranded. As part of its efforts to re-distribute wealth in the country and in the efforts of transformation the ANC needs to urge the former colonial powers of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to take their lost settlers back.

If the ANC is truly committed to this process would this not be a sensible way to go about it. If some tribe somewhere in Zululand wants to be restored to the land of their ancestors why should that be process be limited to South Africans of a particular ethnic origin. South Africa, good luck in your journey, I hope you get where you want to be, but please, I want to go back to England!

South African dead in Kenya mall massacre

September 22 2013/By Sapa

Johannesburg - A South African has died during a shootout at a mall in Kenya, the international relations and co-operation department said on Sunday.

“The South African government condemns the terrorist attack in Kenya in which a number of civilians, including a South African national were killed,” departmental spokesman Clayson Monyela said in a statement.

Earlier, the Sunday Independent reported that six South Africans, including two children were trapped in the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi when the attack began on Saturday.

It is not yet clear if the person killed was one of them.

Agence France-Presse reported on Sunday afternoon that the death toll stood at 59.

Kenyan troops, apparently backed by Israeli forces, were working to end the standoff, with gunmen still holding hostages inside the mall.

Monyela said consular assistance was being given to the family of the South African who was killed.

“Terrorism in any form and from whichever quarter, cannot be condoned,” said President Jacob Zuma.

"We wish the Kenyan government every success in rapidly resolving this issue with as little further loss of life as possible," he said. - Sapa

South Africa will be at African Union meeting on International Criminal Court

by Nicholas Kotch/bdlive.co.za/23 septembre 2013,

NEW YORK — South Africa said on Sunday that it will attend a special African Union (AU) summit to debate calls for the continent to withdraw en bloc from the International Criminal Court (ICC) in protest over its alleged bias against African leaders.

"We are going to attend the meeting, we will participate, we will listen," International Relations and Co-operation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said in New York.

"We will not pre-empt the outcome," she told Business Day on the eve of the annual United Nations General Assembly.

Diplomats here expect the ICC to be a major talking point but there will be efforts to prevent it overshadowing official debates on the Millennium Development Goals and other global issues.

According to media reports last week, the AU will host a special summit in Addis Ababa on October 13 with the only agenda item being the ICC.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta is due to enter the dock at the Court in The Hague on November 12, accused of crimes against humanity over the killings of about 1,200 Kenyans people after elections in late 2007.

Anger has built up in several African presidencies over what they perceive as discrimination by the ICC. It has indicted serving or former leaders from Kenya, Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire for alleged crimes while declining to press charges against former US president George Bush and former British prime minister Tony Blair over the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

Apart from Kenya, supporters of an African pull-out from the Rome Statute, which paved the way to the ICC, are reported to include Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Eritrea.

To really gain traction, that lobby will need to recruit heavyweight nations but there are no signs yet that either South Africa or Nigeria will back a move whose international ramifications and reputational damage could be severe.

Ms Nkoana-Mashabane shed no light on Pretoria's intentions.

"We are quite a disciplined and democratic government so we don't decide the outcome of meetings before they sit," she said.

She echoed the South African government's condolences to victims of the weekend attacks on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall in which at least 68 people including one South Africa were killed. Somali group al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack by gunmen and linked it to longstanding opposition to an African Union force in Somalia that supports the official government there.

Kenya, Uganda and Burundi are the main African troop suppliers to the 17,000-strong force.

"The resolve and the intervention of the AU supported by the UN will not waver, we will move forward unshaken to the goal of sustaining peace and security on our continent," the South African minister said. "There is no other way, no alternative".

Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto is already standing trial at The Hague but is not in custody and is allowed to travel to and from the Dutch capital, unlike other defendants.

On Saturday Ms Nkoana-Mashabane dedicated a statue of Nelson Mandela outside South Africa's embassy in Washington.

TANZANIA :

Tanzania: Police Challenged to Unearth Zanzibar Acid Attackers

By Issa Yussuf/Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)/21 September 2013

Zanzibar — HOME Affairs Minister, Dr Emmanuel Nchimbi has warned that the police risk losing their dignity and respect should it fail to crack down on the group killing and using acid to attack people.

"Spare no effort in ensuring that any group of people trying to destabilise Zanzibar and Tanzania in general is dismantled," underscored Nchimbi on Friday when he met Regional Police Commanders and other senior officers working in the Island.

According to the press statement released by Mr Mohammed Mhina from the police communication unit, Nchimbi urged the officers to use their skills and any available sources to make sure that all criminals are apprehended and taken to court.

This was the first meeting with officers in Zanzibar since the attack on a priest on September 13, this year. President Ali Mohammed Shein has also called upon the police to work hard in finding members of the group using acid to attack people including religious leaders.

Roman Catholic Church Priest Joseph Anselmo Mwang'amba, 61, was injured in several parts of his body when unidentified man threw acid at him. The victim, a well respected elderly man, was coming from an internet café, Mlandege area in the Stonetown.

The police officers meeting with Nchimbi was also attended by Commissioner of Police Zanzibar Mr Mussa Ali Mussa, and the Isles Minister for State (Regional Administration and special units) Mr Hajji Omar Kheri. Kheri who is responsible for Zanzibar paramilitary units also promised that his forces would work closely with the police to make sure that Zanzibar remained safe "all times for its people and visitors."

Commissioner Mussa has said that 15 people were already being investigated and that some of them were linked to terror groups like Al-shabab, and political and Islamic radicalism, but no suspect has been taken to court so far.

KENYA :

Nairobi : les forces kényanes lancent l'assaut final contre les chabab

Le Monde.fr avec AFP, AP et Reuters /le 23.09.2013

Les opérations pour déloger les hommes armés qui ont attaqué un centre commercial de Nairobi, au Kenya, samedi 21 septembre, se poursuivaient lundi matin. Après avoir lancé un assaut "majeur" dans la nuit contre les preneurs d'otages, l'armée kényane affirme que la plupart des personnes retenues ont été secourues, mais que les assaillants menacent de tuer leurs derniers otages, dont on ignore le nombre.

A l'aube, trois explosions ont suivi une intense fusillade d'environ quinze minutes dans le centre commercial. "Tous les efforts sont en cours pour apporter une conclusion rapide à cette affaire", a indiqué l'armée sur son compte Twitter.

Un porte-parole des chabab somaliens, liés à Al-Qaida, qui ont revendiqué l'attaque, a alors déclaré : "Nous autorisons les moudjahidins à l'intérieur du bâtiment à agir contre les prisonniers." Dans son message, il affirme être en contact avec les agresseurs et dénonce les tentatives d'intimidation des forces "d'Israël et d'autres gouvernements chrétiens" à l'encontre du commando. "Nous disons à ces chrétiens qui avancent contre les moudjahidins d'avoir pitié de leurs prisonniers", a poursuivi le porte-parole, affirmant que ces otages "récolteraient les fruits de la pression exercée contre les moudjahidins".

AU MOINS 68 MORTS

L'assaut a été lancé dimanche à la tombée de la nuit avec l'arrivée de deux hélicoptères au-dessus du centre commercial. Une explosion a été entendue, bien plus bruyante que les grenades et échanges de tirs du week-end.

Tout au long de la journée, des tirs nourris ont été entendus dans le centre commercial, assiégé par les forces de l'ordre. L'attaque des chabab a fait au moins soixante-huit morts – dont deux Françaises – et cent soixante-quinze blessés, selon un nouveau bilan donné par la Croix-Rouge kényane. Les assaillants seraient entre dix et quinze et regroupés dans un seul endroit du bâtiment.

Samedi après-midi, une dizaine d'assaillants masqués ont fait irruption dans le centre commercial Westgate, l'un des lieux de promenade préférés des classes aisées de Nairobi, bondé à ce moment-là. Ils ont ouvert le feu à l'arme automatique et jeté des grenades sur la foule cosmopolite – Africains, Indiens et Occidentaux – des clients et des employés du centre, semant la mort et le chaos parmi les familles en train de faire leurs courses et les badauds attablés aux terrasses des cafés.

L'attaque a été revendiquée par les chabab somaliens samedi soir. "Les moujahidins ont pénétré aujourd'hui vers midi dans Westgate. Ils ont tué plus de cent infidèles kényans et la bataille se poursuit", ont affirmé les islamistes sur leur compte Twitter. Une revendication ensuite confirmée dans un communiqué.

The Mujahideen entered #Westgate Mall today at around noon and are still inside the mall, fighting the #Kenyan Kuffar inside their own turf
— HSM Press Office (@HSM_Press)

Ils ont présenté l'attentat comme étant des représailles à l'intervention contre eux de l'armée kényane depuis deux ans dans le sud de la Somalie, rappelant avoir "prévenu le Kenya à de nombreuses reprises". "Ce que les Kényans voient à Westgate, c'est de la justice punitive pour les crimes

commis par leurs soldats [en Somalie] contre les musulmans", ont-ils écrit. "Le message que nous envoyons au gouvernement et à la population kényans est et sera toujours le même : 'Retirez toutes vos forces de notre pays'", ajoutaient les chabab.

L'armée kényane est entrée en Somalie en 2011 et reste depuis dans le sud du pays, dans le cadre d'une force africaine soutenant le gouvernement somalien, qui a infligé de nombreuses défaites aux rebelles islamistes. Le chef de l'Etat kényan, Uhuru Kenyatta, a promis que les "terroristes" qui cherchent à diviser les Kényans seraient vaincus.

SIX HEURES CACHÉE DANS UN MAGASIN

Depuis samedi, les forces de sécurité, policiers et forces spéciales de l'armée, ont progressé, magasin après magasin, pour évacuer les personnes prises au piège. Les premiers clients et employés ont émergé samedi soir par petits groupes, traumatisés.

Une femme a dit avoir passé six heures cachée avant d'être secourue. "J'étais dans un café lorsque j'ai entendu des coups de feu et des explosions. Ensuite j'ai couru pour me cacher dans un magasin", a-t-elle raconté.

Annette, une autre survivante, en sanglots, raconte avoir "vu trois des attaquants vêtus de noir, les visages masqués, et ils avaient de gros fusils". Kenneth Kerich faisait ses courses lorsque l'attaque a commencé. "Soudain j'ai entendu des coups de feu et tout le monde s'est mis à courir. Je me suis allongé au sol. J'ai vu deux personnes tomber et saigner, je pense qu'elles ont été touchées par des balles", a-t-il dit. "Au départ nous pensions que c'était la police qui affrontait des voleurs. Mais nous n'avons pas pu nous enfuir avant que les policiers n'entrent, tirent en l'air et nous disent de sortir", d'après M. Kerich.

Pas de combattant étranger parmi les chabab

Un homme présenté par la BBC comme étant Abou Omar, un commandant des islamistes somaliens, a démenti lundi 23 septembre sur la radio britannique que des étrangers figuraient parmi les assaillants du centre commercial à Nairobi.

"Il y a des rumeurs selon lesquelles des attaquants américains, britanniques et d'autres nationalités sont impliqués, a déclaré l'homme à la BBC. Je peux vous affirmer que rien de tout cela n'est vrai. Ce sont des rumeurs infondées."

Aux spéculations de la presse tabloïd britannique qui évoquait lundi la piste d'une femme britannique, veuve d'un kamikaze qui s'était fait exploser lors des attentats du 7 juillet 2005 à Londres, il a répondu : "Nous ne demandons pas à nos sœurs de mener des attaques militaires de ce type. Ce sont simplement des rumeurs infondées."

Nairobi: les islamistes shebab menacent d'abattre les otages

Source: afp/lundi 23 septembre 2013

La prise d'otages n'est toujours pas terminée ce lundi matin dans le centre commercial Westgate de Nairobi. Les insurgés islamistes somaliens shebab, qui ont revendiqué l'attaque ayant fait au moins 68 morts, menacent désormais d'abattre les otages encore retenus par les assaillants.

«Nous autorisons les moudjahidines à l'intérieur du bâtiment à agir contre les prisonniers,» a déclaré le porte-parole des shebab, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, dans une déclaration mise en ligne

sur un site internet islamiste.

Les assaillants -- un commando islamiste -- sont retranchés depuis samedi dans le centre commercial, et détiennent un nombre indéterminé d'otages.

Dans leur message, les shebab affirment être en contact avec les agresseurs et dénoncent les tentatives d'intimidation de forces «d'Israël et d'autres gouvernements chrétiens» à l'encontre du commando.

«Nous disons à ces chrétiens qui avancent contre les moudjahidines d'avoir pitié de leurs prisonniers», a poursuivi le porte-parole, affirmant que ces otages «récolteraient les fruits de la pression exercée contre les moudjahidines».

Les forces kényanes ont lancé lundi à l'aube un nouvel assaut pour tenter de venir à bout du commando, plus de 40 heures après le début de l'attaque samedi. Une intense fusillade et de fortes explosions ont été entendues sur place.

Kenya shootings: Why we should strengthen ties with east Africa

Date: September 23, 2013/smh.com.au

As news pours in from Nairobi on the shopping centre standoff with Islamist terrorists, Kenya faces yet another in a long line of challenges to its security and stability. The most economically important country in East Africa and the home to numerous NGO and United Nations regional offices, Kenya has been the target of international terrorism on multiple occasions in its short history. After each disaster however, the Kenyan people have rebuilt and soldiered on.

Westgate shopping centre is a massive, popular, modern shopping centre just a short drive from the central business district akin in size and centrality to Sydney's Bondi Junction or Broadway shopping centre. Popular with expatriates, diplomats, local business people and families alike, Westgate includes coffee shops, restaurants, art galleries, high-end clothing and the country's only Adidas store. It represents the economic growth of Kenya and the increasing purchasing power of East Africa's middle class. To this end, it has also come to represent a target for those opposed to Kenya's stability and position as a regional power.

The Somali militant group al-Shabab, which now controls large parts of southern Somalia, has been fighting an international force led by Ethiopian and Kenyan troops over the last few years. The international force has driven al-Shabab into an increasingly limited amount of territory. Losing in traditional battles, al-Shabab has turned to terrorist activities to try to undermine public support in east Africa for the ongoing conflict.

Grenade attacks in Nairobi, bombings in the Ugandan capital during the 2010 World Cup final and now the audacious Westgate attack have become the new al-Shabab tactic.

Kenya has been here before. From the 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi to the 2002 attack on a coastal hotel welcoming Israeli tourists to the countless grenade attacks over the past couple years, Kenyans have borne the brunt of international terrorism. Many of these incidents had little to do with Kenyan policy but had more to do with the proximity of Kenya to those who would do harm to the West.

Kenya is particularly vulnerable to infiltrations due to its long porous border with Somalia, the large number of ethnic Somalis living in Kenya making it easy to blend in to the local population, and the

active recruitment by al-Shabab of young, zealous, poverty-stricken Kenyans desperate for belonging.

The situation in Nairobi represents a massive challenge for Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya's new president. Under indictment by the International Criminal Court, he has a mountain to climb to be seen as a credible leader by the international community. His response to this latest test will go a long way in defining his presidency. The fact that he lost family members in the attack only underscores the impact of the assault on the heart of Kenyan society.

East Africa feels far away from Australia and many Australians would be quick to see the conflict there as distant and unimportant. But Australia is already engaged deeply in the region socially and economically. There are more than 34,000 people in Australia who were born in east Africa and Australian companies – particularly those in Western Australia – are heavily invested in mining and agriculture partnerships.

By most accounts the new Australian government is looking to pull back from Africa diplomatically and in terms of foreign aid but Julie Bishop's consistent reframing of Australia's region as "Indian Ocean Asia-Pacific" does acknowledge the growing economic importance of WA as well as Australia's engagement to the west. Perhaps this provides an opportunity for ongoing partnership with the emerging countries of east and southern Africa which have experienced strong economic growth, improving democratic governance and a burgeoning presence on the international stage.

Supporting the resilience of Kenyans as they emerge from this crisis would send a strong signal from Australia that it understands the threats of global terrorism and sees East Africa as a partner for the future.

Africa 'Most' hostages rescued from mall: Kenyan forces

London Daily Telegraph/The Associated Press/The StarPhoenix/ September 23, 2013

Kenya's military said late Sunday it had rescued "most" of the remaining hostages held by Islamist militants in an upscale Nairobi mall after launching an assault to end a bloody two-day siege that left 68 dead, including two Canadians.

And Canadian authorities confirmed Sunday they are investigating an unverified report that a 24-year-old Ontario man was one of the al-Shabab gunmen who stormed the mall over the weekend.

"We are aware of the reports but do not comment on operational matters of national security," Rick Roth, the spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, told Postmedia News.

The military raid, which began shortly before sundown Sunday, came as two helicopters circled the Westgate Mall, with one skimming very close to the roof. A loud explosion rang out, far larger than any previous grenade blast or gunfire volley.

Kenya Defence Forces later said they had taken control of most of the mall. A military spokesman refused to release the number of hostages rescued or those still being held.

Until Sunday night, the militants - a group of 10 to 15 Islamists, including both men and women, and sent by al-Shabab, Somalia's al-Qaida proxy - had held off Kenya's armed forces for more than 30 hours, killing 68 people and injuring 175 in a siege that specifically targeted non-Muslims.

Annemarie Desloges, who worked at the Canadian embassy in Nairobi, was killed

in the attack. Desloges, 29, was shopping at the mall with her husband, Robert Munk, when gunfire rang out.

Naguib Damji, a B.C. businessman, was identified in media reports as the second Canadian victim.

Other victims were believed to be from Kenya, Britain, France, India, Ghana, South Africa and China. At least two Canadian citizens and one permanent resident were also among the injured.

"The government of Canada wants to condemn as strongly as we possibly can this cowardly act that has taken place against many innocent people," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said on Sunday.

"I know that the thoughts and prayers of all Canadians are with the victims, with their friends and their families, particularly those Canadians and their loved ones who have been touched by this crime. And just obviously our assurances that we will continue to work with our partners internationally to do everything we can to fight terrorism."

Meanwhile, a Twitter account that purported to belong to the al-Shabab press office posted what it claimed was a list of names of the terrorists who had stormed the shopping mall, including a "24 y.o. from Ontario Canada."

But the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors terrorist propaganda on the Internet, said it was not a verified al-Shabab account and it would be "very unusual" for jihadists to identify fighters before they had died.

Officials were investigating nonetheless and Roth said Canada would extend its "full support to any investigation of a terrorist act that does or may include Canadian citizens. Terrorists, regardless of their citizenship, must be punished for their cowardice and depravity."

At least 20 Canadians are suspected of having joined al-Shabab.

Kenyan officials had said they would do their best to save hostages' lives, but there was no official word on how many victims remained in the mall. Kenya's Red Cross said in a statement citing police that 49 people had been reported missing. Officials did not make an explicit link but that number could give an indication of the number

of people held captive.

Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was in retribution for Kenyan forces' 2011 push into neighbouring Somalia.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, who lost a nephew and the nephew's fiancée in the attack, reiterated his government's determination to continue fighting the Islamist group.

"We went as a nation into Somalia to help stabilize the country and most importantly to fight terror that had been unleashed on Kenya and the world," Kenyatta said. "We shall not relent on the war on terror."

The United Nations Security Council condemned the attacks and "expressed their solidarity with the people and government of Kenya."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry called Saturday's assault "an enormous offence against

everybody's sense of right and wrong" and described the attackers as "ruthless and completely reckless terrorists."

Westgate Mall is at least partially owned by Israelis, and reports circulated that Israeli commandos were on the ground to assist in the response. Four restaurants inside the mall are Israeli-run or -owned.

The reason the Islamist gang targeted the Westgate shopping centre was clear from the moment they stormed inside brandishing AK-47s and grenades. Anyone who was not a Muslim, or could not prove that they were, was immediately targeted. Reports from separate floors of the building in the first hours of the assault told how the attackers shouted at Muslims to identify themselves.

Many people came forward and were ordered to speak in Arabic, or to recite a verse from the Qur'an. Those who passed this test were allowed to flee. Those that did not were executed, including children.

"People soon realized not to try to cheat," said Charles Karani, an IT engineer who watched from beneath a truck in the rooftop parking lot where he was hiding with his daughters.

Saadia Ahmed, a Kenyan radio presenter who was caught in the assault, said she saw people "say something in Arabic and the gunmen let them go."

"A colleague of mine said he was Muslim and recited something in Arabic and they let him go as well," she said. "I saw a lot of children and elderly people being shot dead."

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Assault on Mall Stuns Kenya

September 23, 2013/online.wsj.com

Death Toll Rises to at Least 68, With Dozens Believed Trapped

NAIROBI, Kenya—Kenyan police late Sunday struck to end a two-day terrorist attack at an upscale mall after the death toll rose to 68, with some 40 people believed trapped inside the complex while armed militants remained at large.

But the terrorist siege of an upscale Nairobi shopping mall pushed into a third day Monday morning, with a round of shooting sounding after dawn as helicopters circled overhead.

"I heard about five shots going together," said Samuel Gitau, a driver who had dropped a client off at an office nearby. "It's been on and off like that for a while."

Kenyan security forces had said late Sunday that they were making a final push against the 10-15 attackers inside and that they expected the standoff to end that night. Instead the country continued to wait anxiously for the end to a siege that began Saturday, targeting a lunchtime crowd filled with families—both Kenyan and foreign.

It was unclear how many people were trapped inside and whether they were being held hostage or were in hiding. Red Cross estimates put the number still missing at about 40.

Attackers stormed at least three entrances to the mall simultaneously when the attack began Saturday. Gunfire ripped through open-air cafes at the main entrance, while a grenade exploded in

the rooftop parking lot and another group of shooters opened fire in the basement garage.

A French man eating at a tapas bar said a gunman yelled "Allahu akbar!"—Arabic for "God is Great!"—as he opened fire on the diners.

"Their mission was to kill, not to steal," said Edwin Omoding, a 26-year-old stocker for the Nakumatt supermarket inside the mall. He said he saw about 20 attackers, including three women.

Mr. Omoding said the attackers identified themselves as members of al-Shabaab, a Somali militant group that has long threatened a major attack against Kenya as retribution for its decision to send troops to help the Somali government fight the insurgents. Twitter messages purportedly from the group claimed responsibility for the attack and taunted the Kenyan government throughout the siege.

"They were questioning people, and they said, 'If you are Muslim you are on the safer side, but if you are Hindu or Christian you will be killed,' " Mr. Omoding said.

He said he and four others hid next to a large walk-in refrigerator, while other people hid in the refrigerator itself. At one point the attackers shot everyone inside the refrigerator, without noticing his group. Mr. Omoding said a bullet grazed his chest but he kept quiet and remained unseen, and was rescued at 9 p.m. Saturday.

Peter Outa, a spokesman for the Red Cross, said late Sunday that at least 68 people had been confirmed killed.

Among them were three Britons, two Canadians including a diplomat, two French women and a prominent Ghanaian poet, their governments said. The local press reported that a Kenyan radio presenter was killed on the roof, and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said his nephew and the nephew's fiancée died in the attack.

When the shooting started, some in the mall ran in one direction only to find themselves facing another flank of shooters. "We tried to escape through the main gate, but the attackers were also coming through that gate. So we turned and tried to go back to the basement," said Peter Ouma, a 25-year-old construction worker.

Mr. Ouma, who was in the basement when attackers entered, said they were dressed in black with their faces masked "like ninjas." He said there was one woman in that group.

"They were at all the exits; even if you wanted to escape you couldn't," Mr. Ouma said. He first hid with about 10 others under a stairwell, then managed to slide underneath a car in the parking garage and stayed there until he was rescued by soldiers Sunday morning.

The deadliest attack to hit Kenya since the 1998 U.S. embassy bombing started around 12:30 p.m. local time Saturday.

Most of Westgate's shops are on three main levels, with a few more in the basement and a movie theater that extends up onto a higher level. When news of an attack there first filtered out to the city through phone calls and text messages, initial assumptions were that it was a robbery, a common occurrence in a crime-ridden city where going into shopping centers requires handbag searches and a once-over with a metal detector.

But inside the mall, the scene was bloody. A waitress at the popular ArtCaffe restaurant said men

entered the dining area and just started shooting the patrons.

Over the course of the day, Kenyan police and soldiers slowly pushed in, ushering out people who were hiding in restrooms, banks' safe rooms or the depths of restaurant kitchens.

Security forces sought to surround the attackers without knowing how many there were, where they were holed up or whether they had hostages.

As of Sunday night, many people still hadn't made it out. The Kenyan Red Cross said 49 people had been reported missing by family or friends and were believed still inside. The Red Cross later said that nine bodies had been found.

President Kenyatta called the assault an "evil and cowardly act of terrorism" and vowed to continue to fight against the Somali militants. "I want to be very clear and categorical: We shall not relent on the war on terror. We will continue that fight, and we urge all people of goodwill throughout the world to join us and to ensure that we uproot this evil," he said.

More than 175 were injured in the attack, according to Joseph Ole Lenku, Kenya's secretary for the interior. He said more than 1,000 people were safely evacuated.

Kenyan officials said there were still 10 or 15 attackers in the building Sunday evening, cornered in one location. Officials said at least one attacker died of his wounds after having been arrested.

As the drama continued into the night, the Kenyan government started trying to soften the latest painful blow to East Africa's biggest economy. Nairobi is a hub for multinationals and nonprofit organizations doing business in Africa. Westgate mall is a crossroads of expatriate life in the city. It is also a stop for tourists en route to Kenya's safari parks and beaches.

Kenya already has weathered several bouts of domestic turmoil this year. National elections in March passed without any of the ethnic violence that killed more than 1,000 people after the last contest in 2007. But the victor, Mr. Kenyatta, is set to go on trial at the International Criminal Court in November in a case involving alleged crimes against humanity related to ethnic violence during the 2007 election. He has said he is innocent.

On top of that, much of Nairobi's international airport was destroyed in a fire last month. Its cause remains unknown as an investigation continues.

So far, Kenya's economy has soldiered ahead. The International Monetary Fund forecast in April that gross domestic product would expand 5.8% this year, up from 4.7% in 2012.

Kenya's finance ministry said this month that the country hopes to issue bonds worth at least \$1.5 billion to foreign investors in November to fund ambitious infrastructure programs.

But this weekend's strike at the heart of Kenya's cosmopolitan comforts is drawing a new cloud of uncertainty over a linchpin African economy.

"The question is where does this leave the narrative about a Kenyan economy ready to take off," said Razia Khan, head of Africa research at London's Standard Chartered Bank. "You have this awful attack, destructive as possible in its aim—it's going to be a challenging time to be sure."

Kenya: Fate of mall hostages unclear

Sept. 23, 2013/cbsnews.com

NAIROBI, Kenya A Kenyan military spokesman Monday said that the fate of hostages inside an upscale Nairobi mall besieged by al-Qaeda-linked terrorists was not clear despite earlier statements that "most" hostages had been rescued.

Military helicopters circled over the mall at daybreak, when about five minutes of sustained gunfire broke out at the mall, a clear indication that at least one of the estimated 10 to 15 gunmen who attacked the mall when it was filled with shoppers Saturday was still on the loose.

The two-day standoff has killed at least 68 people and injured 175.

The Reuters news agency reports the Somali Islamist group al Shabaab threatened to kill the hostages if force was used. Reuters cites an audio statement carried by a website linked to the group.

The assault, which began shortly before sundown, came as two helicopters circled the mall, with one skimming very close to the roof. A loud explosion rang out, far larger than any previous grenade blast or gunfire volley.

Kenyan police said on Twitter that a "MAJOR" assault by security forces was ongoing to end the two-day siege.

"This will end tonight. Our forces will prevail. Kenyans are standing firm against aggression, and we will win," Kenya's Disaster Operations Centre said on Twitter.

Kenya Defence Forces later said it had rescued most hostages and had taken control of most of the mall. Officials did not immediately release the number of hostages rescued or the number that remained. Four Kenyan military personnel were wounded in the operation, the military said.

CBS News travel editor Peter Greenberg, currently in Nairobi, said government sources have told him that joint Israeli-Kenyan forces are inside the mall and that the operation to end the siege is under way.

Westgate Mall is at least partially owned by Israelis, and reports circulated that Israeli commandos were on the ground to assist in the response. Four restaurants inside the mall are Israeli-run or owned.

In Israel, a senior defense official said there were no Israeli forces participating in an assault, but the official said it was possible that Israeli advisers were providing assistance. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was discussing a classified military issue, would not elaborate.

Israel has close ties to Kenya going back many years. And in recent years, Israel has identified East Africa as an area of strategic interest and stepped up ties with Kenya and other neighboring countries, due to shared threats posed by al Qaeda and other extremist elements.

In 2002, militants bombed an Israeli-owned luxury hotel near Mombasa, killing 13 people, and tried to shoot down an Israeli airliner at the same time. Kenyans and foreigners were among those confirmed dead, including British, French, Canadians, Indians, a Ghanaian, a South African and a Chinese woman.

The assault came about 30 hours after 10 to 15 al-Shabab extremists stormed the mall from two

sides, throwing grenades and firing on civilians at will.

Loud exchanges of gunfire emanated from inside the four-story upscale mall, throughout the day Sunday. Kenyan troops were seen carrying in at least two rocket propelled grenades and helicopters hovered throughout the day. Al-Shabab militants reacted angrily to the helicopters on Twitter and said the Kenyan military action was endangering hostages.

Kenyan officials said they would do their utmost to save hostages lives, but no officials could say precisely how many hostages were inside. Kenya's Red Cross said in a statement citing police that 49 people had been reported missing. Officials did not make an explicit link but that number could form the basis of the number of people held captive.

Somalia's al Qaeda-linked rebel group, al-Shabab, claimed responsibility for the attack that specifically targeted non-Muslims. The attackers included some women. The Islamic extremist rebels said the attack was retribution for Kenyan forces' 2011 push into neighboring Somalia.

Al-Shabab said on its new Twitter feed -- after its previous one was shut down on Saturday -- that Kenyan officials were asking the hostage-takers to negotiate and offering incentives.

"We'll not negotiate with the Kenyan govt as long as its forces are invading our country, so reap the bitter fruits of your harvest," al-Shabab said in a tweet.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry condemned what he called "an enormous offense against everybody's sense of right and wrong," and called the attackers "ruthless and completely reckless terrorists."

Kerry, who was in New York, for meetings at the United Nations, spoke Sunday with Somalia's foreign minister and U.N. ambassador.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta reiterated his government's determination to continue fighting al-Shabab.

"We went as a nation into Somalia to help stabilize the country and most importantly to fight terror that had been unleashed on Kenya and the world," said Kenyatta. "We shall not relent on the war on terror."

He said although this violent attack had succeeded, the Kenyan security forces had "neutralized" many others.

Earlier in the day Kenyatta said he his nephew and his nephew's fiance were killed in the attack.

Former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga told reporters at the mall that a number of people were being held hostage on the third floor and the basement area of the mall, which includes stores for Nike, Adidas and Bose stores.

Kenyan security officials sought to reassure the families of hostages inside but implied that hostages could be killed. The security operation is "delicate" because Kenyan forces hoped to ensure the hostages are evacuated safely, said Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Lenku.

"The priority is to save as many lives as possible," Lenku said, adding that more than 1,000 people escaped the attack inside the mall on Saturday.

"We have received a lot of messages from friendly countries, but for now it remains our operation," Lenku said.

More than 175 people were injured in the attack, Lenku said, including many children. Kenyan forces were by Sunday in control of the mall's security cameras, he said.

CBS News' Peter Greenberg described the Westgate as "a very large mall, with more than 80 stores and large grocery stores and banks" that is popular with locals and tourists alike. He said the attacks have been "terrifying."

Greenberg said many buildings in Nairobi, including the parliament building, have been placed on lockdown.

Britain's prime minister, in confirming the deaths of three British nationals, told the country to "prepare ourselves for further bad news."

Westgate Mall is at least partially owned by Israelis, and reports circulated that Israeli commandos were on the ground to assist in the response. Four restaurants inside the mall are Israeli-run or owned.

Kenyans and foreigners were among those confirmed dead, including British, French, Canadians, Indians, a Ghanaian, a South African and a Chinese woman.

Kofi Awoonor, a Ghanaian poet, professor and former ambassador to Brazil, Cuba and the United Nations, died after being injured in the attack, Ghana's presidential office confirmed. Ghana's ministry of information said Awoonor's son was injured and is responding to treatment.

Kenya's Red Cross said the death toll on Sunday rose to 68 after nine bodies were recovered in a joint rescue mission.

Kenya's presidential office said that one of the attackers was arrested on Saturday and died after suffering from bullet wounds.

Britain's Foreign Office said that Foreign Secretary William Hague has chaired a meeting of Britain's crisis committee and sent a rapid deployment team from London to Nairobi to provide extra consular support.

The United Nations Security Council condemned the attacks and "expressed their solidarity with the people and Government of Kenya" in a statement.

There was some good news on Sunday, as Kenyan media reported that several people in hiding in the mall escaped to safety in the morning, suggesting that not everyone who was inside overnight was being held by al-Shabab.

Cecile Ndwiga said she had been hiding under a car in the basement parking garage.

"I called my husband to ask the soldiers to come and rescue me. Because I couldn't just walk out anyhow. The shootout was all over here -- left, right- just gun shots," she said.

Four American citizens were reported injured in the attack. The wife of a foreign service national working for the U.S. Agency for International Development was killed, U.S. officials said. No details about the injured Americans were released by the State Department, which cited privacy

concerns. Consular officers were in contact with the injured and were providing appropriate assistance, a State Department official said.

Kenya's 'Little Mogadishu' fears backlash after Shabaab attack

By Kevin Mwanza/Reuters/Mon Sep 23, 2013

NAIROBI |

(Reuters) - In the shabby "Little Mogadishu" quarter of Kenya's capital, Somalis feared the militant attack on a Nairobi shopping mall could trigger a violent backlash against them.

Islamist group al Shabaab said it carried out the raid on the Westgate center, that killed at least 68 people, in revenge for Kenya's military campaign against its fighters in Somalia.

In the congested Eastleigh neighbourhood, memories were still fresh of the mobs who targeted homes and shops in November after a suspected al Shabaab attack on a minibus killed nine.

"A mob of youths can ... attack us like last time," said Mohamed Warsame, sitting next to a stall selling "khat" leaves, which are chewed as a stimulant across the Horn of Africa.

The elderly man said he expected the police would at least mount more raids to round up illegal immigrants and suspected militants.

Groups of Somali men talked in hushed tones and at one electronics shop, the owner changed channel to switch from the live coverage of the mall assault drama to a tennis match.

"I don't think those people who attacked the mall are true Muslims. Islam does not support killing of the innocent. Anyone who kills an innocent person has killed humanity," said a woman in her 40s who would only give her first name, Zuleka.

She said she had lived in Kenya for more than a decade, one of thousands of ethnic Somalis who have fled years of war and turmoil to seek a better life in east Africa's biggest economy.

A shoe seller who declined to give his name said the Westgate mall raiders were bringing Somalia's war to Kenya. "The reason we're here is because of such people who have invaded our country (Somalia)," he told Reuters.

"Now they're coming here to make our lives miserable."

There are also concerns Saturday's attack will badly dent tourism and investment in Kenya.

"This will be bad for business here. Some of the shops here will have to close," said Farrah Abdi, an 19-year-old ethnic Somali and a mobile phone shop attendant in Eastleigh. He said he was born there and had never been to Somalia.

"I consider myself more of a Kenyan ... My whole life is here."

The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims condemned the raid on the mall as a "heinous terror attack" and called for Kenyans not to divide along sectarian lines.

Somalia's ambassador, Mohamed Ali Nur, appealed to Kenyans not to target Somalis. He told

Citizen TV he was about to attend a funeral of the wife of a Somali killed in the mall attack.

"Here in Kenya we have Somali citizens who live here, as refugees, business people, students. We do not want them to be harmed in anyway ... I want to repeat that Kenya and Somalia are together in this, we should not be separated," he said.

"WE HAVE SEEN THE DEVIL"

Muslims make up barely 11 percent of Kenya's 40-million strong population which is made up of a patchwork of ethnic groups.

But Islam has long been the predominant religion along its eastern coast - and there have been sporadic outbursts of sectarian violence in the port city of Mombasa.

There have been attacks against Christian churches and police, some blamed on an outlawed coastal group, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), which wants to secede from Kenya.

Coastal Muslims complain that they have lost land and jobs to settlers from inland, while seeing little of the wealth generated by tourism on their beaches and traffic at their port, which serves most of east and central Africa.

Police trucks filled with armed officers patrolled major Mombasa streets on Sunday, while local politicians and religious leaders appealed for Kenyans of all faiths to stay calm.

"This is an attempt to drive a wedge between Muslims and other religious groups in Kenya, but we want to tell those terrorists that we are brighter and aware of their intentions, and that we will not succumb," Mombasa senator Hassan Omar said.

Anglican Bishop Julius Kalu, speaking during a Sunday service in Mombasa, called for unity and prayers.

"We have seen the devil in his true colours. Our faith as Kenyans has been tested," he said. "Let us unite as a Kenyan family in this grief, regardless of our religious affiliations."

ICC judge excuses Ruto for week to deal with Nairobi
Sep 23/ (AFP)

The Hague, Sep 23 (AFP) The International Criminal Court excused Kenyan Vice President William Ruto from his crimes against humanity trial for a week so he can deal with the Nairobi militant attack.

"In the light of the circumstances... the Chamber does excuse Mr Ruto from the proceedings before the court... for one week only," Judge Chile Eboe-Osuji said today at an urgent hearing.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Africa Assaults Show Common, Brutal Goals

September 22, 2013/online.wsj.com

Al Qaeda-Linked Strikes Target Foreign Civilians, Cite Revenge on Anti-Insurgent Nations;
'Potential for Mutual Inspiration'

By

PETER WONACOTT

in Nairobi, Kenya,

DREW HINSHAW

in Accra, Ghana, and

SIOBHAN GORMAN

in Washington, D.C.

Assaults across Africa by al Qaeda-backed gunmen over the past year have pointed to a crude but devastating tactic taking hold on the continent: killing civilians.

From Nigeria in the west, to Algeria in the north, and Somalia in the east, local allies of al Qaeda have launched attacks that share the same fluid and ruthless style. Roving gunmen have killed gas workers in Algeria, villagers in Nigeria, and now, shoppers in Kenya. Conducted by local factions thousands of miles away from one another, and mounted by local factions the attacks have achieved a common goal of mass carnage.

On Sunday, the standoff in a Nairobi shopping mall between Kenyan security forces and militants stretched into a second day, with the government saying gunmen had slain at least 68 people and injured more than 175; more than 1,000 escaped the mall after Saturday's assault on the lunchtime crowd. On Sunday evening, Kenyan police said they had begun a final push to clear the building.

The insurgency known as al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, via Twitter. It was seen in part as revenge for Kenya's role last year in dispatching peacekeepers to drive the terrorist group out of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu.

U.S. foreign-policy experts said the Nairobi attack reasserted al-Shabaab's capabilities at a time many thought its power had been diminishing.

"There's been this tendency to predict the demise of al Qaeda, whether it's in Pakistan, Somalia or other locations, and they have demonstrated an ability to regenerate and conduct attacks when it is in their interest," said Seth Jones, an al Qaeda specialist at Rand Corp.

The attack was in keeping with the types of strikes the group has mounted by hitting a target that would have a higher proportion of foreigners and would do economic harm to the country, a U.S. official said, much like the groups' other attacks on restaurants and nightclubs.

The suspected militants appear to have exposed security weaknesses in Kenya. The attacks suggest insurgents are learning from one another—if not yet coordinating attacks—and punctures the myth that al Qaeda's Africa franchises are fragmented and isolated, said Paul-Simon Handy, research director of the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria. "What is new here is the potential for mutual inspiration," he said. "This isn't a fiction anymore."

In a brief speech on Sunday, as helicopters and planes roared overhead, Kenya's president, Uhuru Kenyatta, said the attack was international in nature. In addition to the scores of Kenyan victims, several foreign nationals died. They included three Britons, two Canadians and two French women—a mother and a daughter—who were executed in the mall's parking lot, the government said.

"This is an incident of terror, an incident that can happen in any city, in any capital anywhere in the world," Mr. Kenyatta said. "This is an international war. And we need to join hands and work together to see it effectively destroyed."

The U.S. government over the weekend pledged military, diplomatic and law-enforcement assistance to the Kenyan government. "We basically said: Let us know what you need," a senior U.S. official said.

U.S. officials said on Sunday that the Nairobi attack wasn't necessarily an indicator of a greater threat posed to U.S. interests there. The attack may not signal "any sort of broadening of al-Shabaab's ambitions or a broadening of its goals," a U.S. official said. "It's a continuation of its long-standing battle to weaken the countries Shabaab views as its chief aggressor."

The official said the attack, however, was significant both for its size and its targeting of Westerners. "This isn't about the U.S.," the official said. "It's Westerners."

The Nairobi attack unfolded in the same way as the January hijacking of a gas facility in southern Algeria. A jihadist brigade held more than 800 people hostage at the plant, jointly operated by British firm BP PLC, Norway's Statoil ASA and Sonatrach, the Algerian state oil company, for four days, until Algerian forces raided the site. Thirty-seven expatriates died.

"The method is the same," said Pascal Le Pautremat, a professor at Paris-based Institut des Relations Internationales et Stratégiques. "They hit the heart of a country as well as its most remote periphery to spread a sense of insecurity among the population."

The attackers at the Algerian plant called their raid revenge for a French intervention in nearby Mali, in January, against a trio of al Qaeda-allied insurgencies.

Weeks later, Nigerian militants belonging to the group Boko Haram took a French family hostage, again claiming the act as a retributive strike against France. As many as several hundred Boko Haram members had trained in Mali, and analysts said their campaign for Islamic rule across Africa's most-populous nation, which has left thousands dead, bears tactical resemblance to a two-decade-long al Qaeda-backed Islamic uprising in Algeria.

Last week, meanwhile, a shooting spree in the Nigerian village of Benisheik left 87 people dead. Nigeria's military blamed the killings on Boko Haram. Soldiers have cut cellphone service in the area and restricted travel, making it difficult to confirm such reports. In Benisheik, Boko Haram fighters were still popping up on country roads this past weekend, firing at civilians, then dashing back into the surrounding scrubland, said Mohammed Kana, an aid worker with Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency. At least four people, including a young boy, died in those skirmishes, he said. The Nigerian military had begun to fly warplanes over the area.

In more government-focused assaults, both Somali and Nigerian rebels have bombed administrative buildings and assassinated politicians. Having weakened the state, those insurgencies then turn their guns against the population, said Kwesi Aning, research director at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, Ghana.

"It's to show that the government is incapable of protecting you," he said.

In the wake of such attacks, governments have responded as they have in the past—bluntly.

Nigeria has declared a state of emergency in its north giving soldiers free rein to detain civilians, enter their homes and block off highways. Meanwhile, Kenyan officials have promised swift justice for the perpetrators of the attack on its Westgate mall, popular with affluent Kenyans and foreign residents in Nairobi.

"We will punish the mastermind swiftly, and indeed, very painfully," said Kenya's President Kenyatta, whose nephew died in the attack.

Crushing displays of military force allowed governments here to quash the ethnic rebellions of the 1960s, back when today's generals and defense chiefs were foot soldiers. Now, those leaders find themselves at the helm of a fight that requires the more complex challenges of protecting civilian populations, said analysts. Some aren't up to the task, said Mr. Aning of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.

"We basically need to change our thinking around fighting terrorism," he said. "Most of our armies and intelligence services are trained in conventional warfare, and they're seeing all these nonconventional demands put on them."

Experts drew parallels between the Nairobi mall shootings and the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India, both of which deployed automatic assault-style weapons against civilians and held them hostage.

"It's been almost five years since the Mumbai attacks, and everybody's surprised we haven't seen a repeat of that type of operation," said Bruce Hoffman, a Georgetown University professor specializing in al Qaeda. Although terrorists frequently target areas likely to inflict harm on civilians, "what's different and consequential [in Nairobi] is the ease with which this can be done," particularly in a country less experienced in dealing with terrorists, he said.

Experts said very few terrorist groups linked to al Qaeda stick to local attacks as they grow.

"Much like al Qaeda [in the] Arabian Peninsula having gone international very early, we have al-Shabaab going not international, but regional, in an extremely concerning manner, Mr. Hoffman said.

"This was a group that because of their diminishing territorial control in Somalia over the past couple of years was seen by many as on the decline and to be almost a metaphor for the diminishing prospects of al Qaeda," Mr. Hoffman said. The latest incarnation of al-Shabaab "could be more challenging than its predecessor," he said. "One way or another, we're still fighting the war on terrorism."

Nigeria: Visa Unveils Africa Integration Index, Nigeria Scores Below Average
By Providence Obuh/Vanguard/23 September 2013

Visa Nigeria, has unveiled the Africa Integration Index, a study that measures the degree of economic integration within key trade corridors of sub-Saharan Africa.

The study, which offers a detailed analysis of key country clusters in sub-Saharan Africa: West, East

and Southern Africa, reveals strength and areas of growth potential. A report jointly produced by the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the World Economic Forum, said closer regional integration would be crucial in addressing underlying weaknesses in Africa's long-term competitiveness and ensuring that the continent delivers on its massive growth promise.

Four key metrics were used to measure integration: the flow of goods and services or trade (T), financial integration and the movement of capital (C), the flow of information and knowledge (I) and the movement of people (P). This TCIP model assigns a numeric value to the level of integration, with the global median score being 100.

Meanwhile, the integration index constructed for a set of 11 constituent countries, representative of the regions, with a combined population of 437 million people, or 55 per cent of the total population at the end of 2012, shows that Nigeria scored 40.6, below average of the countries measured.

Although, the country made significant strides in regional integration efforts where its score increased from 30.8 to 35.7 in the same period, yet global integration score was relatively stagnant from the start of 2011 to the end of 2012, with only real movement arising in the flow of people.

Speaking at a launch of Visa Africa Integration Index in Nigeria, Country Manager, Visa West Africa, Mr. Ade Ashaye said, "there is growing evidence that supports the argument that cross border interactions or openness, drives economic growth and socio-economic advancement.

"Our objective was to construct an index for a number of selected sub-Saharan African countries to measure their global and regional integration based on recent data. We want to better understand Africa to help unleash the enormous growth potential in electronic payments on the continent, now the heart of the developing world."

He pointed out that the integration index is particularly relevant, given the release of the Africa Competitiveness Report 2013 earlier this year.

Also, visiting Professor of Economics, Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) Johannesburg and partner to the study, Mr. Adrian Saville, noted that Africa is still the least integrated region in the world, saying, "but there are signs of change. While improving the base, the countries that make up the index have undergone positive structural transformation over the past decade.

"The index offers recent evidence of the 11 countries show improvements in economic integration over the period measured: the four years period that make up 2011 and 2012," Saville said.

However, South Africa has the highest score on the visa Africa integration index, improving from 61.1 at the start, to 63.3 at the end of 2012.

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

Standoff continues at Nairobi mall as US investigates deadly terror attack

September 23, 2013/FoxNews.com

Nearly 48 hours after a deadly attack on a shopping mall in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, by an Al Qaeda-backed Somali militant group, there was still no word regarding the fate of an unknown number of hostages whom Kenyan authorities had said were still inside the building.

On two separate occasions Monday morning, reporters and witnesses outside the Westgate shopping mall could hear sporadic gunshots and occasional heavy bursts of rifle fire along with muffled blasts, implying that Kenyan police and special forces had not yet secured the building.

Reuters reported Monday that a spokesman for the terror group Al Shabab, which has claimed responsibility for Saturday's attack targeting non-Muslims that killed at least 68 people and injured 175, threatened that the hostages would be killed if Kenyan security forces, who are being aided by Western and Israeli military experts, tried to storm their position.

"Israelis and Kenyan forces have tried to enter Westgate by force but they could not," Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage was quoted as saying in an audio statement posted online. "The mujahadeen will kill the hostages if the enemies use force."

On Sunday, Kenyan officials had said that while "most" of the hostages had been freed after a major assault had been launched on the mall, an unknown number of people were still being held by up to 10 to 15 militants inside a supermarket in the shopping complex.

Meanwhile, the FBI and the U.S intelligence community are "aggressively" investigating whether or not Americans were among members of an Al Qaeda-linked militant group involved in an attack and hostage situation at a mall in Kenya, a federal law enforcement source told Fox News.

There are between 50 to 200 hostages and most of them were hiding in various places inside the mall, Fox News confirms. They are not being held by the hostage-takers. There are between 10 to 15 militants currently inside the mall, with at least one being female.

The military assault began shortly before sundown, with one helicopter skimming very close to the roof of the shopping complex as a loud explosion rang out, far larger than any previous grenade blast or gunfire volley.

"This will end tonight. Our forces will prevail. Kenyans are standing firm against aggression, and we will win," Kenya's National Disaster Operation Centre said on Twitter.

At around midnight local time, Kenya's Defence Forces said it had rescued most of the hostages and had taken control of most of the mall, but declined to give further information on those freed. Officials said four Kenyan military personnel were wounded in the operation.

Many of the rescued hostages -- mostly adults -- were suffering from dehydration, Col. Cyrus Oguna, a military spokesman, told The Associated Press. He refused to say how many hostages were rescued or how many were still being held. He said some of the attackers had "most probably" been killed in the operation.

The source tells Fox News that the U.S. intelligence community believes the attack is a "hot" and "major event," because it is outside the normal scope of al-Shabaab and the alleged "multi-national character" of the attackers.

New York Rep. Peter King, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said on ABC's "This

Week” that al-Shabab is “one of the only Al Qaeda affiliates which actually has actively recruited here in the United States.”

He called the Saturday mall attack a "well coordinated, well planned massacre.”

Kenya’s president, Uhuru Kenyatta, said in a national address Sunday that security forces had managed to isolate the “criminals” in one place inside the building, according to Reuters. Two helicopters were seen flying over the mall.

Some of the people in hiding managed to escape before the military assault, according to Kenyan media reports.

Cecile Ndwiga said she had been hiding under a car in the basement parking garage.

"I called my husband to ask the soldiers to come and rescue me. Because I couldn't just walk out anyhow. The shootout was all over here -- left, right-- just gun shots," she said.

Police said that 49 people had been reported missing, according to a statement released by Kenya's Red Cross.

Kenyatta said in his address that the attackers "shall not get away with their despicable and beastly acts."

"We will punish the masterminds swiftly and indeed very painfully," he added.

The White House said Sunday that President Barack Obama called Kenyatta to tell him the United States supports his country's effort to bring al-Shabab to justice.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry condemned the attack as "an enormous offense against everybody's sense of right and wrong," and called the attackers "ruthless and completely reckless terrorists."

Kenyans and foreigners were among those confirmed dead, including French, Canadians and Chinese. The U.S. State Department said four American citizens were injured and were being given assistance. The age of the victims ranged from 2 to 78, Reuters reports.

Nineteen people, including at least four children, died after being admitted to Nairobi's MP Shah hospital, said Manoj Shah, the hospital's chairman. "We have at least two critical patients currently, one with bullets lodged near the spine," he said.

The hospital continued to receive patients Sunday, he said.

The militants assaulted the mall on Saturday and remained there throughout the night.

Sara Head, an American citizen who is in Nairobi for a business trip, told CBC that she was in the mall's parking garage when gunfire first broke out. She said she hid for an hour and a half inside a stairwell with her driver and two other wounded people before they ran into a bloody supermarket to escape through a loading dock.

Combined Kenyan military and police forces had the mall surrounded on Sunday. An Associated Press photographer saw Kenyan soldiers carry into the mall a rocket-propelled grenade, an extremely heavy weapon for an indoor hostage situation. Kenyan security forces are controlling the

security cameras inside the building, Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Lenku said.

"The priority is to save as many lives as possible," Lenku said, reassuring the families of the hostages in the upscale Westgate mall. Kenyan forces have already rescued about 1,000 people.

Trucks brought in a fresh contingent of soldiers from the Kenya Defense Forces early Sunday.

The mall, which is in the Westlands neighborhood of Nairobi, is frequented by foreigners and wealthy Kenyans.

Security forces had pushed curious crowds far back from the building as the standoff ensued. Hundreds of residents gathered on a high ridge above the mall to watch for any activity.

Kenya has approached Israel for help on the standoff, and Israel sent an advising team.

U.S. law enforcement, military and civilian personnel in Nairobi were providing advance and assistance as requested by Kenya, spokeswoman Marie Harf said.

Kenyatta's nephew and the nephew's fiancée are also among the dead.

Kenya's presidential office said that one of the attackers was arrested on Saturday and died after suffering from bullet wounds.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague said late Saturday that his government had sent a rapid deployment team to Kenya to help. Britons had undoubtedly been caught up in the "callous and cowardly and brutal" assault at the Westgate mall, said Hague.

The United Nations Security Council condemned the attacks and "expressed their solidarity with the people and Government of Kenya" in a statement.

President of Sudan confirms US travel plan

23 Sep 2013/aljazeera.com

President Bashir says he will travel to UN General Assembly in New York despite being wanted for genocide by the ICC.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has surprised United States officials by announcing that he plans to attend this week's UN General Assembly in New York.

The US has led calls for Bashir to face international justice over bloodshed in the now decade-old conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, and a senior State Department official said last week that Bashir would "not receive a warm welcome" if he travelled to New York.

At a news conference on Sunday, Bashir did not say whether the United States had granted him a visa yet, but did say he had made preparations to fly to New York via Morocco.

'We booked a hotel'

"We booked the flight route via Morocco ... we booked a hotel," he said, adding that it was his right to attend the UN assembly.

Bashir said he was not worried that US authorities would arrest him, as demanded by human rights groups, because Washington is not a member of the ICC.

"Nobody in the US can question me or hold me," he said.

A State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the department had received a visa application from Bashir.

The official offered no comment on whether a visa had been issued.

No legal bind

The ICC issued arrest warrants for Bashir in 2009 and 2010 on charges of orchestrating war crimes and genocide, requiring member countries to detain him if he entered their territories.

Since then, he has limited his travel mostly to African neighbours and Arab allies.

The US is not a member of the Netherlands-based ICC, and is not legally bound to hand the president over, but it has transferred ICC suspects to the court before.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) urged, in a statement, members of the UN to publicly oppose Bashir's attendance of its General Assembly.

"If al-Bashir turns up at the UNGA, it will be a brazen challenge to Security Council efforts to promote justice for crimes in Darfur," said Elise Keppler, associate international justice program director at HRW.

"The last thing the UN needs is a visit by an ICC fugitive", she added.

No recognition

Mainly non-Arab tribes took up arms in Darfur in 2003 against Bashir's Arab-dominated government, complaining of neglect and discrimination.

The conflict has killed more than 200,000 people and displaced about 2 million, according to human rights groups and UN officials.

Sudan dismisses the ICC charges, says reports of mass killings in Darfur have been exaggerated, and refuses to recognise the court, which it says is part of a Western plot.

African hostility to the ICC has been growing due to a perception that prosecutors disproportionately target African leaders - a charge the ICC denies.

Report: US military to hit targets in Kenya, other African states

Mon Sep 23, 2013 /presstv.ir

The United States is reportedly preparing a list of targets for possible military strikes in Kenya and some other African countries.

Former US general Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Chiarelli said the strikes are aimed at targeting militants involved in Sunday's deadly attack on a shopping mall in the Kenyan capital city

of Nairobi.

Somalia's Al-Shabab fighters have reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it is in retaliation for Kenya's military actions inside Somalia.

"They're developing targets . . . and refining target lists, trying to fill in any gaps that we possibly have," the former four-star general said during an interview with ABC's This Week on Sunday.

"Intelligence has been gathered and will continue to be gathered to fill in any holes that we have about what happened in this particular attack and what could happen in the future," Gen. Chiarelli added.

Chiarelli described the situation "very chaotic" and added that US military officials are "doing all of the kinds of things that you would do to gain information in."

He, however, refused to elaborate how and with what means the US forces or their allies will target the group's hideouts in Kenya.

This as Kenyan security sources in Nairobi revealed that Israel has sent its special forces to Kenya to fight with the militants at Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall, according to an AFP report.

The report added that Israeli Commandoes were airlifted to the east African country just after the start of the attack.

CANADA/AFRICA :

Canadian diplomats who have been killed or kidnapped on the job
September 22, 2013/o.canada.com

OTTAWA — Annemarie Desloges, the 29-year-old Canadian diplomat who was killed in the shopping mall attacks in Kenya, was the first Canadian diplomat killed while serving abroad in more than seven years.

Here is a list of other incidents in which Canadian diplomats or non-government officials doing service work were killed, injured or taken hostage abroad:

In January 2006 Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry, 59, was killed in a suicide car bomb attack in Afghanistan. Berry, 59, was one of Canada's leading experts on Afghanistan. He was serving as Canada's senior political director at the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. The attack killed two other civilians and left 10 people injured.

At the time, the Department of Foreign Affairs said that the previous record it had of a Canadian diplomat being killed before 2006 was in 1964, when Vancouver's John Douglas Turner, who was presumed dead when his aircraft disappeared over Vietnam.

Veteran diplomat Robert Fowler was taken hostage by al-Qaida operatives in December 2008 while working as the UN's special envoy to Niger. He and his colleague Louis Guay were held captive in the Sahara desert for four months, then released in April 2009.

Canadians Christopher Klein-Beekman, 31, and Gillian Clark, 47, were among 23 people killed in August 2003 when a truck blew up outside the UN office in Baghdad, Iraq. Clark was working with the Christian Children's Fund, and Klein-Beekman was working for UNICEF.

Mark Bourque, a retired Quebec RCMP officer, was shot and killed while on a UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti in December 2005. Bourque, 57, was in Haiti for a four-month term as a police technical adviser and was ambushed while on patrol.

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

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