

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The World This Week



**KENYA WILL "NEVER BE
SAFE"**

Anet McClintock

AL-SHABAAB CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR MULTIPLE ATTACKS IN EAST AFRICA

At least four people have been killed and fifteen more wounded in an attack by designated East African terror organisation al-Shabaab in Somalia. The attack took place about 30 kilometres from the capital Mogadishu. Among those injured were Turkish engineers, working on a nearby road. A speeding car fitted with a suicide bomb rammed into the area where Turkish engineers and Somali police were having lunch.

In an earlier attack on a Kenyan military base, a United States soldier and two contractors were killed. The attack was carried out near Manda Bay Airfield, which is used by both the Kenyan and US militaries. The attack started early morning Sunday January 5, and lasted for four hours. The Kenyan military said no Kenyans were injured, but five militants were killed during the attack.

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Al-Shabaab, an organisation who pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012, has also claimed that they have destroyed seven aircraft and three military vehicles.

A few days later, al-Shabaab launched another attack against a local school in Northern Kenya.

More recently, al-Shabaab carried out another attack in Somalia, using a car bomb to kill at least four people and injure more than ten others. The car was packed with explosives, and tried to pass through a checkpoint near the parliament in Mogadishu. When the car failed to pass through the checkpoint, the bomb was detonated.

These attacks come shortly after a deadly attack on December 28, 2019, which killed 81 people. The explosion was caused by a car bomb set off near a busy intersection in Mogadishu, and killed dozens of civilians, students and Turkish nationals among them. It has been the largest attack in the Horn of Africa in two years.

The radical Islamist group have repeatedly warned that Kenya will “never be safe”, threatening tourists in the area, and signalling for more attacks on US interests. Al-Shabaab has fought for more than ten years to topple the Somali government. The group has also accused Turkey, a large donor of humanitarian aid in the area, of attempting to control Somalia’s resources.



Isabel Dos Santos - Nuno Coimbra (Wikimedia Commons)

Africa's Richest Woman Has Eyes on Presidency Despite Frozen Assets

Africa’s richest woman, Isabel dos Santos, daughter of Angola’s ex-president José Eduardo dos Santos, has announced she will be running in the 2022 presidential election, despite having billions of assets frozen. Dos Santos is accused of diverting billions of dollars of state money, an allegation she denies.

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Dos Santos gained her position and wealth after being appointed the head of the state oil company, Sonangol, by her father in 2016. Leaked documents have shown that in a series of suspicious deals over two years, Dos Santos and her husband bought state assets and made lucrative deals involving oil, diamonds and telecoms. In December, an Angolan court ordered that all bank accounts belonging to her and her husband be frozen, and all assets seized.

Together they are accused of diverting more than one billion dollars from Sonangol and diamond trader Sodiam to firms in which they hold stakes. Dos Santos denies these claims, asserting that they are accusations aimed to stifle her political ambitions in Angola.

South Africa Misses Deadline to Bail Out National Airline

The government of South Africa has missed a deadline to pay a bailout of two billion rand to the national airline, South African Airways. Last month, the airline entered a form of bankruptcy protection.

The national airline last made a profit in 2011, and since then has been barely surviving thanks to a series of government bailouts. Since 1994, the airline has received more than 57 billion rand in bailouts. Strikes carried out by airline employees late last year exacerbated the financial woes of the company.

South African Airways is one of the country's biggest financial woes, along with the state-owned energy supplier, Eskom. Decades of corruption and mismanagement have meant that companies like SAA and Eskom have been left in a crippling cycle of debt and bailouts. President Cyril Rampaphosa has been battling rival factions within the African National Congress, South Africa's ruling party, to implement the policies needed to reform the state companies.

International and South African analysts have said the woes of the state companies are the single largest threat to the economy. South Africa is currently in its worst downward economic spiral since 1945.