

Beat: Travel

Uganda says it disrupted al-Shabaab terrorist cell in capital

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USPA News - Several people were arrested in the Ugandan capital of Kampala on Saturday during an operation to stop an "imminent attack" by the al-Qaeda-linked militant group al-Shabaab, prompting security forces to deploy across the capital, Ugandan and U.S. officials said. Uganda Police Force spokesman Fred Enanga said an unspecified number of arrests were made to disrupt the plot, but provided no further details.

The confirmation came hours after the U.S. Embassy in Kampala said counter-terrorism operations were being carried out in the capital and urged American citizens there to remain at home or to go to safe location. "Today, Ugandan authorities reported the discovery of an al-Shabaab terrorist cell in Kampala, Uganda," the U.S. Embassy said in an emergency message. "We remain in close contact with our Ugandan counterparts as investigations continue into what appears to have been planning for an imminent attack. We urge that you exercise all possible caution, remaining at home or in a safe location until the all clear is issued." The discovery of the alleged terrorist cell prompted Ugandan authorities to increase security at key sites across the capital, including Entebbe International Airport near Kampala. "We are continuing our engagement with Ugandan authorities as we seek to assess the scope of the disrupted al-Shabaab terrorist plot and whether there are members of the cell still at large," the U.S. Embassy said. "As a cautionary measure, and to give authorities time to put their heightened security measures in place, we urge all U.S. citizens to continue to shelter in place through this evening." The terror alert came nearly two weeks after al-Shabaab leader and co-founder Ahmed Godane was killed in a U.S. airstrike on a militant camp in north-central Somalia on September 1. The Islamist militant group later confirmed Godane's death, naming Sheikh Ahmad Umar Abu Ubaidah as their new leader and promising "great distress" to its enemies. Al-Shabaab was the militant wing of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts which seized most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2006, but it later lost ground before pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012. One of the group's worst attacks happened in 2010, when 74 people were killed in two bombings at World Cup viewing parties.

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