

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Somalia: Civilians pay the price of bomb attack in Mogadishu**

Amnesty International condemns the armed group al-Shabab's bomb attack which occurred yesterday in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital city, killing between 68 and 82 persons and injuring over 90 others, many of them civilians. There was no effort made to distinguish civilians from military targets in the attack, nor to minimize its effects on civilians, as required from all parties to an armed conflict under international humanitarian law.

Yesterday, shortly before 10 am, a truck exploded in front of a government compound, hosting several ministries of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government, at one of Mogadishu's busiest road intersections known as Km4 (Kilometre 4), in Wadajir district.

According to local sources, among the casualties were some 50 secondary school graduates, students and their parents who were checking the results of applications for scholarships to study abroad, including in Turkey, at the Ministry of Education situated in the compound.

Other casualties included passengers in vehicles and pedestrians on the busy road; civil servants working in the ministries hosted in the compound; and security guards manning the entrance of the compound. Civilian buildings and property in the area were also damaged or destroyed by the force of the explosion. Some of those killed and injured appeared to have been burnt by fuel when the truck exploded.

Al-Shabab, the armed Islamist group which announced its withdrawal from Mogadishu in August 2011 but remains in control of much of South and Central Somalia, claimed responsibility for the attack. An al-Shabab spokesman was quoted as saying that the attack was conducted by a suicide bomber and was targeting the government compound and warned of future attacks.

The bomb explosion is a stark reminder that civilians in South and Central Somalia remain at serious risk of being killed and injured in attacks that are prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Amnesty International is calling on all parties to the armed conflict in Somalia, including al-Shabab, to immediately cease all direct attacks on civilians, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. Those who order and carry out such attacks should be held accountable for war crimes.

Amnesty International reiterates its call for an international Commission of Inquiry, or similar mechanism, to be set up to systematically investigate and record violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed in Somalia, as a first step to address decades of impunity in the country.