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## **Somalia : Civilian deaths in hotel explosion condemned**

Amnesty International condemns the unlawful killing of civilians in an explosion today at a student graduation ceremony in Shamo hotel, Mogadishu.

The blast appears to have occurred as people had gathered to celebrate the graduation of medical students from Banadir University in the hotel, in a district of the capital Mogadishu which remains under the control of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government. No one has claimed responsibility for the blast.

Reports have emerged that explosives were detonated during the ceremony itself.

“Civilians attending a graduation ceremony were deliberately targeted. This kind of attack constitutes a war crime. The targeting of civilians is always prohibited under international law,” said Amnesty International.

At least 56 people were taken to one hospital in Mogadishu following the blast and four of these have since died, according to medical sources.

Two journalists, Hassan Zubeir Haji Hassan (known as Fantastic), a cameraman with the Al Arabiya news channel and Radio Shabelle reporter Mohamed Amin Adam Abdulle were killed along with students and a lecturer.

Three members of the Transitional Federal Government including the Ministers of Higher Education, Education and Health were also killed.

Details of what caused the explosion are still unclear, but the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) stated that a suicide bomber had detonated explosives where people had assembled and the attack was directed at the Transitional Federal Government.

### **Background**

Several suicide bombings targeting Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) officials or African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) occurred in 2009. Al-Shabaab armed groups opposed to the TFG claimed responsibility for these attacks.