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Kenya marks one year since Westgate Mall attack that killed 67

By Sapa | Sep 21, 2014 | COMMENTS [0]

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Kenya was Sunday commemorating the first anniversary of an attack by the Somali radical

shopping mall where at least 67 people were killed.

President Uhuru Kenyatta said the attack had made Kenya "see the face of pure evil."

"We also witnessed ... that ordinary people are capable of truly extraordinary feats of compassion, selflessness, and solidarity," Kenyatta wrote in a letter printed in newspapers.

"We have come here to pray and to tell the victims that life has to go on," said Irshad Sumra, a legislator from Kenya's Indian community, many of whose members were killed.

Four gunmen stormed the Westgate shopping mall on September 21, 2013, throwing grenades and firing indiscriminately at anyone in sight.

The government says the attackers were killed during the four-day siege that ensued, but the bodies were never produced.

Citizens marched for peace in Eastleigh, a predominantly Somali neighbourhood in Nairobi that has been hit by a

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string of strikes blamed on al-Shabaab since Westgate.

The Nakumatt supermarket chain, which had its flagship store in Westgate, held a minute of silence at all its stores in East Africa, during which employees recited inter-denominational prayers.

At the Storymoja Festival, an annual literary event in Nairobi, speakers paid tribute to Ghanaian poet Koffi Awoonor, who was killed at Westgate before he was able to give a lecture at last year's festival.

Another act of remembrance took place in Nairobi's Karuna Forest, where a plague was unveiled naming the victims of the massacre.

Ahmed Godane, the leader of al-Shabaab, was killed in a US airstrike earlier this month.

Godane had claimed responsibility for ordering the Westgate attack, which al-Shabaab said was in retaliation for Kenyan and Western action against it in Somalia.

The radical Islamist group once controlled most of southern and central Somalia and even parts of Mogadishu. While it has been weakened militarily by Somali and African Union troops, it still wields power in some areas.

It seeks to establish an Islamic state in Somalia, and has had an alliance with al-Qaeda since 2012.

themed wedding
Kenyan commandos on
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technology, humans lose in this case

"It would be unwise to rely on any evidence by those witnesses who gave evidence on what they heard that morning. Human beings are fallible and rely on memory, which fades over time."

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