

Suspected militant kills himself in Mogadishu blast: police
By Edmund Blair, Reuters
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A suspected al Shabaab militant was killed on Thursday trying to plant a bomb in a busy district of the Somali capital, a police official said, after the Islamist group threatened more attacks following two deadly assaults this week.

Western and Somali officials are concerned that al Shabaab, who were driven out of Mogadishu two years ago but still control swathes of mainly rural areas, may be regrouping and seeking to rebuild their strength in the capital.

At least 30 people were killed on Sunday by a car bomb, suicide bombers and gunmen at Mogadishu's law courts and a car bomb explosion near the airport.

After that attack, one of the worst since al Shabaab were ejected from Mogadishu, a spokesman for the group warned the government that more would follow.

A police spokesman at the scene of Thursday's blast, not far from university buildings and schools, said: "This was an al Shabaab man who wanted to kill civilians. Fortunately, it killed only him."

One of the bomber's fingers could be seen on the ground.

The spokesman said three suspects had been arrested in the district. The street where the bomb exploded leads from the capital's central district to Tarbunka, an area of displaced families.

Although an offensive under an African Union peacekeeping banner has pushed al Shabaab out of urban strongholds in central and southern Somalia, the latest attacks suggest that the militants remain a potent force.

Britain, which has a large Somali population and has warned of threats to its own security from Somali-trained militants, had warned this month of an imminent attack in Mogadishu.

Stabilizing Somalia and boosting the new government's ability to counter the militant threat is seen as vital to preventing Somalia being used as a training ground for militants who could go abroad, and for curbing piracy.

(Reporting by Abdi Sheikh; Writing by Edmund Blair in Nairobi; Editing by Kevin Liffey)

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