

Beat: Miscellaneous

Four Somali men charged over Nairobi mall attack

-, 04.11.2013, 21:58 Time

USPA News - Four Somali men were charged and appeared in a Kenyan court on Monday over accusations they had sheltered some of the gunmen who attacked an upscale shopping mall in the capital Nairobi in September, killing 67 people during a four-day-long siege. The four men, identified as Mohammed Ahmed Abdi, Liban Abdullah, Adnan Ibrahim, and Hussein Hassan, appeared before magistrate Dolphin Okundi at the Milimani High in Nairobi.

They were each charged with the commission of acts of terrorism that resulted in death, aiding a terror group, and being in Kenya illegally. Prosecutors accused the men, aged between 20 and 25, of allowing some of the mall attackers to take shelter at their houses in Eastleigh, a suburb of Nairobi that is sometimes called "Little Mogadishu" because it is predominantly inhabited by Somali immigrants. One of the suspects was also accused of obtaining a false Kenyan identity card in 2010. The four men, who are not accused of being among the attackers, pleaded not guilty to all charges. But because the men have no official residence and have been deemed a flight risk, Okundi ordered the suspects to remain in custody until next Monday, when they will make a second court appearance. Prosecutors also requested more time to allow investigators to analyze other evidence such as data from mobile service providers. The attack began at around noon on September 21 when more than a dozen suspected al-Shabaab gunmen stormed the popular Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, opening fire with assault rifles and throwing grenades at terrified shoppers. An unknown number of people were held hostage as the gunmen engaged in gun battles with security forces, leading to a four-day-long siege. Al-Shabaab previously claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was in retribution for Kenya's military deployment in Somalia. Of the 61 civilians who died during the siege, nineteen were foreigners, including six Britons and Ghanaian poet and diplomat Kofi Awoonor. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta's nephew Mbugua Mwangi and his fiancée were also killed.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1563/four-somali-men-charged-over-nairobi-mall-attack.html>

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