

Kenya cracks down on al-Shabaab funding and recruitment after Garissa attack

by [Fredrick Nzwili](#)

April 9, 2015

c. 2015 Religion News Service

NAIROBI, Kenya (RNS) Faced with a fierce enemy driven by Muslim extremist ideology, the government has cracked down on funding for al-Shabaab, the Somali group that claimed responsibility for killing 148 mostly Christian students at Garissa University College a week ago.

This week, Kenya froze the accounts of 85 groups and individuals, including bus companies and Muslim rights organizations, allegedly linked to the group. It has closed down one hotel in Eastleigh, a neighborhood in the Nairobi commonly known as Little Mogadishu because of its large concentration of ethnic Somalis.

But the freeze on Muslims for Human Rights and Haki Africa, two nongovernmental organizations, raised questions, since they are known for their work on improving the lives of Kenyans and fighting for human rights of all citizens.

“I am amazed that these human rights organizations are believed to have been supporting terror,” said Sheikh Juma Ngao, the national chairman of the Kenya Muslim National Advisory Council. “I think the government needs to provide some evidence.”

A statement jointly signed by Gabriel Dolan, a Roman Catholic priest and a board member of Muslims for Human Rights, and Sheikh Khelef Khalifa, the board chairman, asks the government to “immediately reconsider” its decision and says “the poor are the people who are going to suffer.”

The group’s board is about 60 percent Christian and it includes members of all faiths.

Haki Africa director Hussein Khalid said he too was shocked by the government’s action.

“We have and will always continue to work ... to address matters of human rights and security with the aim of eradicating extremism and radicalization from our midst,” Khalid said.

Meanwhile, the extent of al-Shabaab recruitment in Kenya has also raised concerns, following reports that schoolchildren were being recruited to al-Shabaab.

At least 40 families in Isiolo County, a strategic gateway between northern and southern Kenya, are reportedly missing, according to recorded statements with the police. The families said the children disappeared a year ago and may have traveled to al-Shabaab’s training camps in Somalia.

In 2013, security agencies identified some high schools in Nairobi whose students, who were later sent to Somalia or took part in plots to commit crimes in Kenya.

“It is sad that many Kenyan youth are being radicalized to commit acts of terrorism against fellow citizens,” said Cardinal John Njue on Tuesday (April 7).

The terrorists in the Garissa attack were reportedly Kenyan youth. One of them, Abdirahim Mohammad Abdullahi, was a recent law graduate from the University of Nairobi.

Kenya has been targeted by al-Shabaab largely because of its location. It shares a long border with Somalia. In addition, Kenya is one of the biggest contributors to African Union troops in Somalia.