

Editorial

Cite this article: Farah Yusuf Mohamud M (2024). A Tragic Reminder and Heartfelt Tribute: Analyzing the Effects of Explosive Violence on Somali Students' Educational Journeys in 2009 and 2011. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, **18**, e310, 1 <https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.318>

Corresponding author:
Mohamed Farah Yusuf Mohamud;
Email: m.qadar59@gmail.com

A Tragic Reminder and Heartfelt Tribute: Analyzing the Effects of Explosive Violence on Somali Students' Educational Journeys in 2009 and 2011

Mohamed Farah Yusuf Mohamud^{1,2,3} 

¹Tayo Institute for Research and Development, Mogadishu, Somalia; ²Somali Society for Emergency Medicine, Mogadishu, Somalia and ³Mogadishu University, Mogadishu, Somalia

Terrorist attacks cause widespread harm to both the state and society by employing various tactics, including kidnapping, assassination, explosive attacks, and others in both armed and unarmed assaults.^{1,2} The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that terrorist bombings produce a pattern of one-third of patients with injuries requiring major surgical intervention.³ Transnational terrorism has been on the rise in the last 3 decades, particularly affecting Somalia. During the Somali terror attacks, there was no field triage—only a “scoop and run” approach at the attack sites. Trends in terrorist attacks against locations where graduate students gather, particularly for graduation ceremonies, and the centers where exam results are published, have not been well described.

Here, we observe 2 incidents in Somalia. The first incident occurred at Hotel-Shamo in Mogadishu on December 3, 2009. The Shamo-Hotel was packed with graduates from Benadir University, families, and officials when the powerful explosion happened. The hall had been brightly decorated, and there was a feeling of excitement. Ministers and various dignitaries were seated at the front of the hall, with everyone else facing them. Then, all this brightness turned to dust and darkness. There was blood splattered everywhere. It was a shocking, disbelief, and terrible scene. It's still impossible to understand how quickly everything transformed from a colorful celebration to horror. The bombing killed 25 people and injured 100 more including the dean of Benadir's medical college. The Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Higher Education died in the explosion. The Minister of Sports was critically injured. A medical student said, “A lot of my friends and teachers died”. Dubai-based al-Arabiya Television reported that 1 of its cameramen was killed.

The second explosion happened at the former headquarters of the Agency for Leather and Goods near KM4, Mogadishu, Somalia, on October 4, 2011. Eighty-three people died in the explosion and hundreds were injured, including 45 high school graduate students (students who have finished high school) who had come to check the results of an exam that had already been conducted. The individuals who lost their lives and those injured at that day were innocent people who had nothing to do with the politics and problems of Somalia.

Following the explosions, injured victims did not receive effective emergency medical care due to a lack of organized emergency medical services (EMS) and limited hospital resources in the country. Although the rescue provided to the victims by the Somali government and its people was commendable, the majority of patients were not transported by ambulance. Moreover, there were limited specialized trauma centers and many victims were left without adequate medical attention. Given that EMS were not established in the aftermath of these horrific situations, it is crucial to implement several recommendations to enhance the country's emergency response capabilities, where violence remains a persistent threat.

The Somali government and international organizations should prioritize the creation of a robust EMS system that includes trained personnel, ambulances, trauma care facilities, and communication infrastructure to ensure timely responses to emergencies.

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