**Kenya Attacks: 'Women Abducted' Near Mpeketoni**

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President Uhuru Kenyatta has blamed "local political networks" for the overnight raid on two villages near the town of Mpeketoni.

But Somalia's al-Shabab group had earlier said it was behind the attack.

At least 49 people died in a separate raid on hotels and a police station in Mpeketoni on Sunday.

Al-Shabab said it was revenge for the presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia and the killing of Muslims.

Kenya sent troops to Somalia in 2011 to help the weak UN-backed government defeat the militants.

Two days after the deadly wave of violence in Mpeketoni, Kenyans are still unclear who is responsible.

If it was al-Shabab, the targeting of villages, not towns, and the killing of men only, while abducting women, would be new tactics. By sparing women and children, they could be trying to sanitise their image after even their own supporters criticised them for the indiscriminate killings during the Westgate siege last year.

But there are long-standing political and ethnic divisions in Mpeketoni, and the president has blamed "local political networks" for the deaths. Local ethnic Somalis or Oromos may have targeted members of the president's Kikuyu community and tried to divert the blame by waving al-Shabab flags.

Some locals see the Kikuyus as interlopers, who have become rich after the government gave them land. These are the same feelings which lay behind the deadly ethnic violence which swept the nation after the disputed 2007 elections.

**'Politically motivated'**

The attacks were "well planned, orchestrated and politically motivated ethnic violence against the Kenyan community", President Kenyatta said in a national address on Tuesday.

"This therefore was not an al-Shabab attack," he continued. "Evidence indicates that local political networks were involved in the planning and execution of a heinous crime".

He did not give further details of the suspected attackers. However, he said the police in Mpeketoni were given advance intelligence about the attack, but did not act on it.

"Accordingly, all concerned officers have been suspended and will be charged immediately in a court of law," he added.

But opposition Senator Moses Wetangula has dismissed the president's allegations, describing them as "a joke".

"We Kenyans in the leadership instead of calling in our friends who have better technology, better intelligence, better capacity to even use drones to hit these guys, we are saying it is not terrorism, it is political," he told the BBC.

The Kenyan Red Cross says around [**50 people are still missing**](https://www.kenyaredcross.org/PDF/Mpeketoni%20Attack%20Sitrep%202.pdf) from Sunday's raid on Mpeketoni. The body of a 49th victim was taken to the town on Tuesday.

"There's no time to mourn, we're just burying [the victims]," a resident told the BBC's Anne Soy in the town.

"We raided villages around Mpeketoni again last night," al-Shabab spokesman Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab told Reuters news agency on Tuesday.

He was later quoted by the AFP news agency as saying that the militants "have been going to several places looking for military personnel". He said most of those killed were police officers and wildlife wardens.

Kenyan police said the gunmen raided two villages in the Poromoko district near Mpeketoni late on Monday.

The authorities said the militants jammed a telecommunication system before the killings to prevent villagers from raising the alarm.

Mpeketoni, near Lamu Island, is not a tourist resort. It appears the attackers were not interested in foreigners or their interests, the BBC's Dennis Okari says.

Kenya has been on high alert recently following warnings that al-Shabab was planning more attacks.

The authorities are under mounting pressure from the public, amid criticism they have failed to prevent the latest string of attacks on the coast.

"This government is full of talk and no action," one resident of Mpeketoni told Reuters.

"They keep saying the country is safe, and we keep on suffering at the hands of terrorists."

The US and UK have issued advisories to their nationals to keep away from parts of the Kenyan coast and hundreds of British tourists were evacuated last month.

Last week, the UK closed its consulate in the port city of Mombasa.