

Uganda says 54 peacekeepers killed in Somalia attack

From [AFP](#)

Some 54 Ugandan peacekeepers died when militants besieged an African Union base in Somalia last week, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said, in one of the worst recent attacks by Al-Shabaab jihadists.

“We discovered the lifeless bodies of 54 fallen soldiers, including a commander,” Museveni said in a post on his official Twitter account late Saturday.

Al-Shabaab, which has been waging a deadly insurgency against Somalia’s fragile central government for more than a decade, claimed responsibility for the attack on May 26, saying it had overrun the base. The militants drove a car laden with explosives into the base in Bullo Marer, 120 kilometres (75 miles) southwest of the capital Mogadishu, leading to a gunfight, local residents and a Somali military commander told AFP.

AU forces sent in helicopter gunships as reinforcement after the pre-dawn raid although it did not disclose how many people had died.

Al-Shabaab is known to exaggerate claims of battlefield gains in propaganda, while the governments of nations contributing troops to the AU force rarely confirm casualties. The 20,000-member ATMIS force has a more offensive remit than its predecessor, known as AMISOM.

The force is drawn from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, with troops deployed in southern and central Somalia. Its goal is to hand over security responsibilities to Somalia’s army and police by 2024.

In the [Ugandan press](#) President Museveni is claiming that casualties were higher than they should have been due to incompetence by two officers in charge who, he says, will be court martialed later, plus the army sent troops to Somalia who were not yet combat ready.