

In Western minds, Africa is more often referred to as a country than a continent: a great big swath of conflict, problems and poverty that changes little across the borders of its fifty-four nations. Having observed the World Cup from makeshift public gatherings around generator-powered televisions in Tanzania and Uganda, there was much rhetoric about “Africa united” and the coming together of an entire Continent. However, Sunday night’s bombings in Kampala during the World Cup final are a reminder that this is the continent where most of our planet’s conflicts are fought and where the world’s worst violence is often ignored. Since the troubles brought on by the Lord’s Resistance Army have been transplanted from Uganda to Southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ugandans, as well as the many ex-pat aid workers and volunteers working along side them, had grown accustomed to a seemingly un-fragile peace and security. Despite threats and warnings from Somali Islamists, we were all caught off guard by the bombings in two of Kampala’s most happening spots. Not having personally known any of the 74 who lost their lives I will only have to bare the burden of a slight paranoia in large crowds and the inconvenience of one of my favorite restaurants rendered out of commission. For the mother who sent her child across the world on a church missions trip or for the middle-class Ugandan boy who lost his father, the grief is far more real. We should all pray that peace come to Somalia and that the conflict that has been raging there for some time does not become the world’s next Palestine. Pray that violent fundamentalism be stamped out everywhere in our world, regardless of brand or creed.