

# Mass shootings at New Zealand mosques leave at least 49 dead

By Nick Perry and Mark Baker  
The Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — At least 49 people were killed in mass shootings at two mosques full of worshippers attending Friday prayers on what the prime minister called “one of New Zealand’s darkest days.”

One man was arrested and charged with murder in what appeared to be a carefully planned racist attack. Police also defused explosive devices in a car.

Two other armed suspects were being held in custody. Police said they were trying to determine how they might be involved.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said the events in Christchurch represented “an extraordinary and unprecedented act of violence,” and that many of the victims could be migrants or refugees.

“It is clear that this can now only be described as a terrorist attack,” Ardern said.

In addition to the dead, health officials said 48 people were being treated at Christchurch Hospital for gunshot wounds. Injuries ranged from minor to critical.

Police took three men and a woman into custody after the shootings, which shocked people across the nation of 5 million people. Police later said one of the arrests didn’t relate to the shootings.

While there was no reason to believe there were any more suspects, Ardern said the national security threat level was being raised from low to high, the second-highest level.

National carrier Air New Zealand canceled at least 17 flights in and out of Christchurch, saying it couldn’t properly screen customers and their baggage following the shootings.

Police said the investigation had extended 240 miles to the south, where homes in Dunedin were evacuated around a “location of interest.” A police statement gave no further detail of how it might be linked to the attacks.

Authorities have not specified who they detained, but said none had been on any watch list. A man who claimed responsibility for the shootings left a 74-page anti-immigrant manifesto in which he explained who he was and his reasoning for the attack. He said he was a 28-year-old white Australian and a racist.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison confirmed that one of the people detained was an Australian-born citizen.

Police Commissioner Mike Bush said Friday night that a man had been charged with murder. He did not say whether police believed the same shooter was responsible for both attacks.

Ardern alluded at a news conference to anti-immigrant sentiment as the possible motive, saying that while many people affected by the shootings may be migrants or refugees, “they have chosen to make New Zealand their home, and it is their home. They are us.”

As for the suspects, Ardern said, “these are people who I would describe as having extremist views that have absolutely no place in New Zealand.”

Bush said police had found two improvised explosive devices in one car, a clarification from an earlier statement that there were devices in multiple vehicles. He said they had disabled one and were in the process of disabling the second.

The deadliest attack occurred at the Al Noor

mosque in central Christchurch at about 1:45 p.m., when 41 people were killed.

Witness Len Peneha said he saw a man dressed in black enter the mosque and then heard dozens of shots, followed by people running from the mosque in terror.

Peneha, who lives next door to the mosque, said the gunman ran out of the mosque, dropped what appeared to be a semi-automatic weapon in his driveway, and fled. He said he then went into the mosque to try to help.

“I saw dead people everywhere. There were three in the hallway, at the door leading into the mosque, and people inside the mosque,” he said. “I don’t understand how anyone could do this to these people, to anyone. It’s ridiculous.”

He said he helped about five people recover in his home. He said one was slightly injured.

“I’ve lived next door to this mosque for about five years and the people are great, they’re very friendly,” he said. “I just don’t understand it.”

He said the gunman was white and was wearing a helmet with some kind of device on top, giving him a military-type appearance.

A video that was apparently livestreamed by the shooter shows the attack in horrifying detail. The gunman spends more than two minutes inside

the mosque spraying terrified worshippers with bullets again and again, sometimes re-firing at people he has already cut down.

He then walks outside to the street, where he shoots at people on the sidewalk. Children’s screams can be heard in the distance as he returns to his car to get another rifle.

The gunman then walks

back into the mosque, where there are at least two dozen people lying on the ground. After walking back outside and shooting a woman there, he gets back in his car, where the song “Fire” by English rock band “The Crazy World of Arthur Brown” can be heard blasting from the speakers. The singer bellows, “I am the god of hellfire!” and the gunman

drives away. The video then cuts out.

During a second shooting at the Linwood mosque about 3 miles from the Al Noor mosque, seven people were killed.

One more person died later at Christchurch Hospital.

Mark Nichols told the New Zealand Herald he heard about five gunshots and that a Friday prayer-go-

er returned fire with a rifle or shotgun.

The man who claimed responsibility for the shooting said he came to New Zealand only to plan and train for the attack. He said he was not a member of any organization, but had donated to and interacted with many nationalist groups, though he acted alone and no group ordered the attack. ■

## Community Health Status Event

Tuesday April 2, 2019 8 AM—10:30 AM

Blue Mountain Conference Center, 404 12th St., La Grande

Please RSVP for Breakfast via email to [CommunityRelations@grh.org](mailto:CommunityRelations@grh.org) or call 541-963-1418



Did you take the 2018 Union County Health Needs Survey?

Join us for a presentation of the survey results, roundtable discussions, continental breakfast & more!

Help shape the strategy for future Community Benefit projects!

Review the top health needs identified in the Fall 2018 survey of Union County residents!

More about this event at [www.grh.org/about-us/community-benefit/](http://www.grh.org/about-us/community-benefit/)

Sponsored by Grande Ronde Hospital Community Benefit Sub-Committee & the Hospital Council of NW Ohio.

## Tiny Micro-Chip Now In The Ear: Available!



Now You See It...



Now You Don't!



Tiny micro-processor

- One of the smallest custom hearing aids ever made
- 48 channel digital signal processing
- Digital engineering allows 1,000's of custom settings
- Controlled by state-of-the-art software

Spaces Are Limited Call Today For Your A FREE\* Hearing Evaluation!

And a FREE\* Turkey on US!



### One More Thing

Some parts of the evaluation include the use of a familiar voice, so please bring a spouse or family member with you. Call us today to confirm your appointment time!

## The Miracle-Ear Advantage:

2 for \$995\*

Receive 2 AudioTone™ Pro Hearing aids at \$995 for a limited time only.

\*limit one coupon per patient at the promotional price during event dates only. Not valid with any other discount or offer. Does not apply to prior purchases. Fits up to a 35 db loss. Offer expires 3/22/19

- 100% Satisfaction Guarantee \*
- 3-Year Limited Warranty \*\*
- FREE Lifetime Service
- Over 65 Years in Business
- Over 1,200 Locations Nationwide

**LA GRANDE**  
111 Elm Street  
La Grande, OR 97850  
541-605-2109

**BAKER CITY**  
2021 Washington Ave.  
Baker City, OR 97814  
541-239-3782

**ENTERPRISE**  
603 Medical Parkway  
Enterprise, OR 97828  
541-239-3877

Call Now and Mention Code: 19MarMicro.

Most Insurance Plans Accepted Including Blue Cross Blue Shield



\*To receive a FREE Turkey voucher you must undergo a full hearing evaluation and have a minimum 40dB hearing loss.

\*\*If you are not completely satisfied, the aids may be returned in satisfactory condition within 30 days for a full refund. Fitting fee may apply. \*\*Not valid on Audiotone Pro.