

UAE executive shot while shielding sons from Christchurch shooter

Story 1

A bullet narrowly missed the spine of Adeb Sami who is in a New Zealand hospital with many others injured



Heba Adeb's father was shot in the back after covering her brothers inside Noor mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand as a terror attack unfolded with a gunman killing 49 people.

A UAE company executive was shot in the back as he shielded his sons from bullets fired by the Christchurch mosque gunman.

Adeeb Sami, 52, was visiting Al Noor Mosque for Friday prayers when the shooter burst in and opened fire on worshippers in what has become the deadliest gun attack in New Zealand's history.

He covered sons Ali, 23, and Abdullah, 29, who lay in a pile as they anxiously waited for the gunman to leave. (Editor: By June 10, the story had changed, and he was shielding only one son – Ali – who was in “the back room” calling the police.)

The shootings at Al Noor Mosque and nearby Linwood Islamic Centre, 6km away, left 49 dead and at least 20 seriously injured. About 30 are known to have died at Al Noor. Three people are in custody over the killings, including prime suspect Brenton Tarrant.

CHRISTCHURCH MOSQUE ATTACK

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Mr Sami's daughter Heba Adeeb, 30, who lives in Dubai, said he is recovering after surgery.

“He’s out of surgery and they’re just making sure there’s no internal bleeding now,” Ms Adeeb told *The National*.

Her father, who is a New Zealand national of Iraqi descent, works between New Zealand and the UAE, where he is a director for engineering company Aecom.

Ms Adeeb said when Mr Sami and his sons heard gunshots, he immediately jumped to cover Ali and Abdullah and protect them from the bullets.

In doing so, he took one of the bullets in his back.

“The minute he [gunman] entered the mosque, he started shooting whomever was on the floor. He left them and went out, but the people running around in the corners or whoever tried to go outside was shot by the shooter. At least that’s what my brothers told me.”

“He’s [Mr Sami] a very loving dad,” she said. “I can’t believe something like this would happen at Christchurch.”

Mr Sami is a father of four.



Ali Adeeb with his family. Courtesy Heba Adeeb.

Ms Adeeb said her dad was in New Zealand to celebrate his twin daughter and son's 23rd birthday on Friday.

"He went with my mother to surprise them," she said.

She said that Christchurch is a special place for many families like hers, who have found a new home far from their troubled home countries.

My family was lucky, so many people lost someone

Heba Adeeb

"It's such a close community there and we've never felt threatened or discriminated against. My kiwi friends all respect my culture and want to know more about it," she said. She is still trying to process the hate that drove the attacker to kill dozens of Muslims.

Ms Adeeb only learnt of the attack when she saw her mother and sister on the news, and said she is soon going to fly to New Zealand to reunite with them.

“I’m going to hug them, but it’s not just about me, it’s about all these families who lost someone and are now hurting,” she said.

“My family was lucky,” she said. “But I know so many people lost someone.”

When asked if she had a message to the those reaching out and expressing sorrow, Ms Adeeb asked for continued support.

“49 people were killed in small mosques,” she said. “That’s so many, keep us in your prayers.”

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