

New Zealand mosques terror attack: Heroic bystander 'wrestled firearm from gunman before he fled in waiting car'



[Olivia Tobin](#) The Standard : 16 March 2019

A survivor of the New Zealand terrorist gun attacks has told how a man bravely tackled the suspect and wrestled away his weapon.

On Friday 49 people died after a gunman walked into two mosques in Christchurch at the start of Friday prayers and began firing at random.

The suspect has been named in media reports as 28-year-old Australian man Brenton Tarrant.

Syed Mazharuddin witnessed the horrific terrorist attack, and told how a man risked his life to tackle the gunman.



A forensic official works at the Masjid al Noor mosque in Christchurch
AFP/Getty Images

Mr Mazharuddin said **he saw a man enter Christchurch Linwood Mosque** and began firing at worshippers.

He told the [New Zealand Herald](#): “People [were] feared and there was screaming around. I tried to take cover.

“By the time I took cover, **this guy came through the main entrance door**. It’s a small mosque, there were about 60 to 70 people [in] there.

“Just around the entrance door there were elderly people sitting there praying and he just started shooting at them.”



Police stand outside a mosque in central Christchurch, New Zealand.

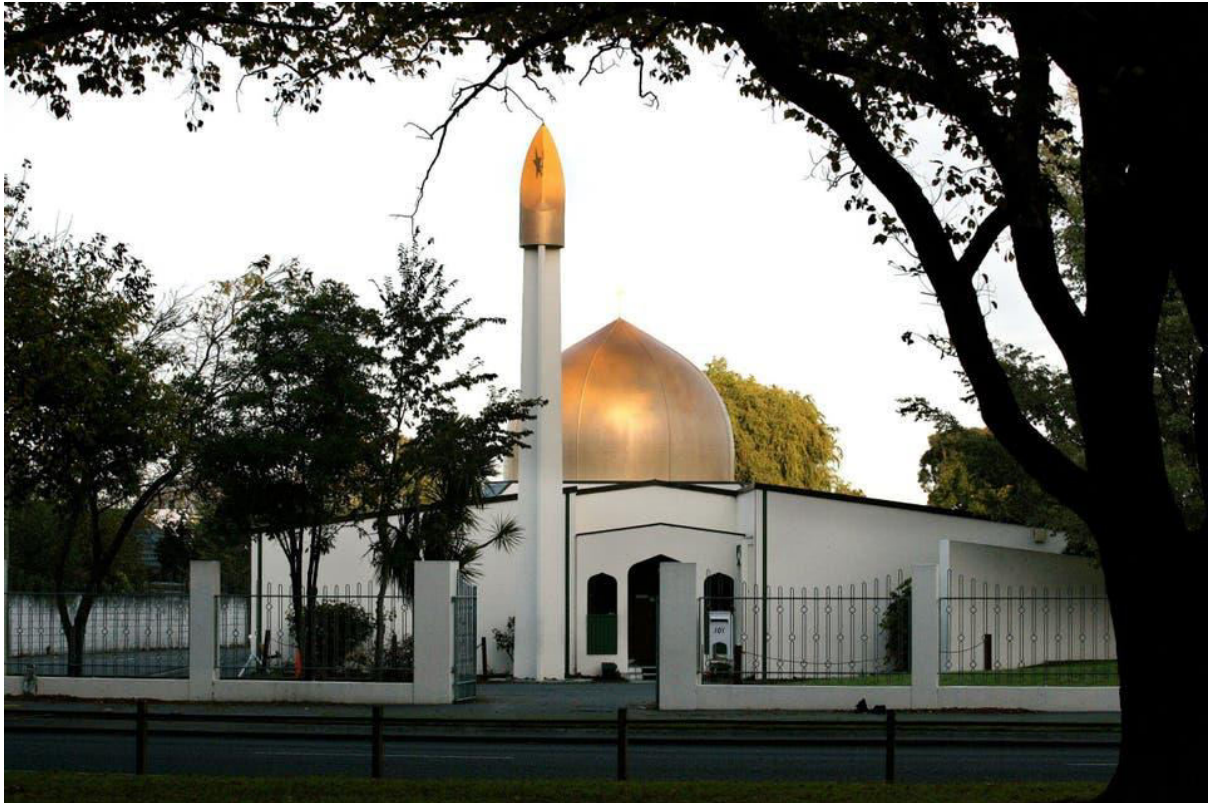
AP

He said he saw a younger man, who worked at the mosque, try to save others.

"The young guy who usually takes care of the mosque ... he saw an opportunity and pounced on [the gunman] and took his gun," Mr Mazharuddin said.

He added: "The hero tried to chase [him] and he couldn't find the trigger in the gun. He ran behind him but there was people waiting for him in the car and he fled."

Tragically, Mr Mazharuddin said he saw two of his friends die in the attack.



A view of the Al Noor Mosque on Deans Avenue in Christchurch, New Zealand.
REUTERS

“I ran out and then the police came and they didn’t let me come back in again, so I couldn’t save my friend, he was heavily bleeding,” he said.

Officers in New Zealand said they are continuing to make enquiries after the attack.

In a statement, police said: “As the Prime Minister stated yesterday, this has been designated a terrorist attack.

“49 people have died and 42 are being treated for injuries. Two of those injured are critical and this includes a four-year-old child who is being transported to Starship Hospital this morning.



A police officer responds following shooting at Linwood in Christchurch, New Zealand
Reuters

“41 people were killed at the Deans Avenue mosque, and seven at the Linwood Avenue mosque. One has since died in hospital.

“Our thoughts go out to those who have been affected by this unprecedented event.

“A 28-year-old man will appear in Christchurch District Court today charged with murder.

“Two others remain in custody.”