

Mosque gunman killed worshippers as they pleaded for their lives

Marine Lourens, Stuff, 15:51, Aug 24 2020

Note: In the “live stream”, no worshippers are heard pleading for their lives. The only voice that is heard is purportedly that of Ansi Alibava (the “woman” in the gutter at the entrance to the alley). The plea that is heard is “Help me! Help me!”

GRAPHIC WARNING: *The terrorist who massacred 51 people and injured 40 others in Christchurch last year told police he had hoped to kill more people and burn the mosques down.*

He said he wanted to [instil fear in non-Europeans and had planned attacks on other New Zealand mosques](#) before deciding on Christchurch.

The last close people he contacted before starting his massacre on March 15 was his family in a text message sent at 1.31pm, telling them of his plans. Police received the first 111 call from the Masjid An-Nur (also known as Al Noor Mosque) 10 minutes later.



CHRIS SKELTON/Stuff

Shootings victim Wasseim Alsati leaves the High Court at Christchurch on the first day of the mosque gunman's sentencing.

Brenton Harrison Tarrant, 29, who was led into court with his arms and legs shackled and flanked by at least four Corrections officers, is being [sentenced in the High Court in Christchurch this week](#) on 51 charges of murder, 40 charges of attempted murder and a

charge of committing a terrorist act. He could become the first in New Zealand to be sentenced to life imprisonment without parole.

Justice Cameron Mander confirmed with the shooter if he was going to represent himself during the sentencing. “Ah yeah,” he said.

The victims were worshippers at Masjid An-nur Masjid and the Linwood Islamic Centre (Linwood Mosque) in Christchurch.

New details emerged as the summary of facts was read in court on Monday morning, including the gunman’s planning of the attack and graphic accounts of the “systematic” shootings he carried out, including of young children.

Crown prosecutor Barnaby Hawes outlines the actions the March 15 terrorist made in the lead up to the Christchurch mosque attacks.

The planning

The Australian national [arrived in New Zealand in 2017 and settled in Dunedin](#). He successfully applied for a firearms licence in September that year.

Between December 2017 and March 2019, he collected an arsenal of weapons, including high-powered firearms, military specification sighting systems, telescopic sights, and more than 7000 rounds of ammunition.



JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON/Stuff

The Australian national is being sentenced on 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one terrorism charge in the High Court in Christchurch on Monday.

The gunman bought military-style ballistic armour and tactical vests, which meant he could carry numerous magazines. This was to be worn over military-style camouflage clothing.

He went to [several rifle clubs and practised with different firearms](#). He modified the triggers of his military style semi-automatics rifles to fire faster.

He [used his months in Dunedin to formulate a plan to kill as many people as possible](#). From the internet he got detailed mosque plans, interior pictures of the mosques, mosque locations, and specific details such as prayer times and important days on the Islamic calendar when the mosques would be at their busiest.



Chris Skelton/Stuff

March 15 survivors and their families prepare to enter the High Court in Christchurch.

He outlined his extreme ideology in a manifesto he called “The Great Replacement”, a document that has since been [classified as objectionable in New Zealand](#).

On January 8 last year, the gunman travelled to Christchurch to scope out Masjid An-Nur. He sat opposite the mosque and flew a drone over the grounds and buildings, filming what he saw. He focused on the entry and exit doors.

From this moment, the [An-nur Masjid and the Linwood Islamic Centre became his primary targets](#). He planned to attack the Ashburton Mosque after leaving Linwood but was arrested on the way.

He planned his attack down to the finest details, timing his entry into the mosques when the maximum number of worshippers would be present, and anticipating the time needed to carry out the attacks and travel between the mosques.



Chris Skelton/Stuff

A child survivor of the March 15, 2019, Christchurch mosque shootings arrives at court for the terrorist's sentencing. The child cannot be identified for legal reasons.

The day of the attack

On March 15, the defendant left his Dunedin flat and drove to Christchurch. His vehicle was loaded with firearms, a large amount of ammunition pre-loaded into magazines, and four modified petrol containers intended to be used as incendiary devices. His intention was to burn down the mosques at the conclusion of the attacks. He also took ballistic armour and a military-style tactical vest.

On the vast number of firearms and magazines the gunman took with him to Christchurch, he had written [various names and dates referencing historic figures and events such as battles and figures in the Crusades](#), and more recent terror attacks and symbols used by the Latvian, Hungarian, Estonian and Norwegian SS.

He parked his car close to Masjid An-Nur and undertook his final preparations. He wrapped one of the bullet-proof vests around the back of the driver's seat to provide some ballistic protection while driving. He arranged four of the firearms in the front passenger and driver's footwell within reach.



JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON/Stuff

Mosque shooting survivor Taj Mohammad Kamran give his victim impact statement in the High Court in Christchurch on Monday.

The remaining two firearms were laid in the rear luggage compartment of the car alongside the four incendiary devices.

He dressed in military style camouflage clothing and a full tactical vest with front pockets containing at least seven fully loaded .223 magazines and a scabbard holding a bayonet-style knife.

He mounted a GoPro-camera to the front of his ballistic police-style tactical helmet to record the attacks and [broadcast the footage online in real time](#).

He also attached an audio speaker to the front of his vest through which he played loud music from the time of entry to Masjid An-Nur.

At 1.28pm he sent the Great Replacement manifesto to an extremist website. At 1.31pm he sent a message to his family outlining his intentions and instructions on how to deal with the media and police following his attack. At 1.32pm he activated the GoPro, which began recording and sending a live feed to Facebook.

He sent emails containing his manifesto and specific threats to attack the Christchurch mosques to Parliamentary Services and numerous national and international media agencies. This was designed to limit any emergency services response and ensure he had sufficient time to carry out his plans.

At this time there were about 190 worshippers, including women and children, inside Masjid An-Nur, many of whom were at prayer.



JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON/Stuff

Dr Maysoon Salama, whose son Ata Elayyan was killed in the attack, reads her victim impact statement in the High Court.

Attack on innocents

The shooter drove to Deans Ave and waited for a short while because he was early. He turned a strobe light flashing torch on with the purpose of causing confusion amongst his victims. He then turned the GoPro camera towards his face, clearly identifying himself. He spoke into the camera at various times throughout the attack as though addressing an audience.

The gunman parked his car in a driveway neighbouring the mosque and got out. He slung the Windham Weaponry AR-15 rifle over his shoulder and carried the Mossberg Shotgun. The other firearms and incendiary devices were left in the vehicle.

He walked into the mosque car park and approached the front door. Worshippers Mounir Soliman, Syed Ali, Anjad Hamid and Hussein Moustafa entered the mosque in front of him. The men had their backs to him and did not notice the gunman approaching.

Notes: (1) In the “live stream”, no one is seen entering the mosque ahead of the “gunman”, (2) This story is at odds with the popular narrative, which has Daoud Nabi standing in the doorway and greeting the “gunman” with the words “Hello, Brother”, or “Welcome, Brother”, or “Salam, Brother”, (3) All these people are uncharacteristically late arrivals for Salat al-Jumu’ah, which is, according to the official narrative, already starting or about to start.

Without warning the terrorist raised the shotgun and fired nine shots in quick succession, then another three shots. All four men died.



JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON/Stuff

Mohammad Atta Ahmad Alayan, who was shot in the head and shoulder and whose son was killed, reads his victim impact statement in the High Court in Christchurch.

The gunman then entered the mosque, firing shots at worshippers as they tried to flee. In the corner of one of the prayer rooms, a group of worshippers huddled together and on top of each other trying to hide. There was nowhere for them to escape to.

The gunman fired 32 shots from his AR-15 into the mass of people huddled in the corner.

He then turned his firearms on another group of people trying to escape through a single exit door in the southeastern corner of the room.

The sentencing hearing for the Christchurch mosque shooter hears about the heroic actions of Naeem Rashid, who lost his life trying to save others.

As he did this, [Naeem Rashid](#) ran at the gunman, crashing into the attacker after he was shot.

Rashid's actions helped several worshippers escape.

The gunman returned to the main prayer room and fired 39 times at victims trying to hide or get away.



CHRIS SKELTON/Stuff

A woman outside the Christchurch Justice Precinct on the first day of the sentencing of the mosque terrorist.

He emptied the gun's magazine, then continued his massacre through the rest of the mosque.

Note: The “live stream” shows the “gunman” operating only in the hallway and the main prayer hall.

He killed Ashraf Ragheb as he ran down the hallway to the mosque entrance. He slowly and deliberately shot people who were wounded and crying out for help with his AR-15.

Note: In the “live stream”, no one is heard crying out for help – except “Ansi Alibava”, as mentioned in a note above.

They included a 3-year-old boy clinging to his father's legs. He shot the child twice.

Note: No children are seen in the “live stream”.



JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON/Stuff

The gunman in the High Court in Christchurch on Monday.

Horror on the street

The gunman went outside and saw at least four people on the footpath in the distance. He raised the AR-15 and fired 27 aimed shots as they ran, including at Mohammad Faruk.

Note: In the “live stream”, no distant runners are discernible.

The gunman returned to his car, discarded the Windham Weaponry AR-15 on the ground and retrieved the Ruger AR-15 rifle, which was fully loaded with two full magazines. He then ran back on to Deans Ave and south towards the mosque gates.

Note: He enters via the second (carpark) gate, while the car to the left of the mosque entrance, driven by an unknown person, exits via the first (main) gate.

He fired at Muse Awale, who fell to the ground and died. He fired at a 16-year-old boy sheltering among vehicles. The boy had managed to escape from the main prayer room thanks to the bravery of Rashid but died outside.

Note: The “live stream” does not show the “gunman” firing at anyone in the mosque compound before he enters the mosque for the second time. No “bodies” are left there.

As the gunman drove off, he drove over the body of a woman who was lying on the side of the road where he had killed her earlier.

Note: This “woman”, who is later photographed without a head, is purportedly Ansi Alibava.

Forty-four people died at the Masjid An-Nur.



Stacy Squires/Stuff

Survivor Alabi Lateef following the shooting at the Linwood Mosque.

Firing from the car

After leaving An-Nur, the gunman put his next destination in his vehicle's GPS and started driving to the Linwood Islamic Centre.

As he was driving, he braked heavily to fire from his windscreen at men who appeared to be of African descent on a side street and in a car.

Note: A figure is glimpsed in a side street, but this person's ethnicity is impossible to determine. Seconds later, the "gunman" fires at a man getting into a car. He then fires two more shots, apparently at cars, before reaching the Argyle Motel.

But when he noticed a European man walk out of a property on to Deans Ave, he gave the person a sign using his right hand and smiled at him before driving off.

Note: A man of indeterminate ethnicity is glimpsed emerging from a property. But a smile is not seen in any of the flashes of the "gunman's" face in the rearview mirror.

He drove a short distance and came to a stop outside the Argyle Motel where Muhammad Nasir and his son were walking towards the Al Noor Mosque. Both were dressed in traditional clothing. He pointed the shotgun through the closed passenger window of his vehicle.

The shotgun failed to fire, so the shooter actioned the weapon then aimed and fired again, hitting the man. He then pointed the weapon at the son who was trying to hide beside a wall. Once again the gun failed to fire and the shooter sped off.

The gunman continued shooting at victims he came across on his way to Linwood. He talked and laughed to himself as he drove.

The second target

He stopped [in the driveway of the Linwood Islamic Centre](#), parking across the end of the driveway to stop other vehicles entering or leaving.

He got out of his car with an Uberti .357 Magnum lever-action rifle and walked to the centre of the long driveway. Three people – Muhammad Raza and his parents Ghulam Hussain and Karam Bibi – were standing next to a vehicle near rear of the property.

The gunman fired at the trio, killing them all.

He then proceeded down the east side of the building and fired at a man's silhouetted head in a window.



Joe Johnson/Stuff

Armed police on Linwood Ave after the Linwood Islamic Centre was attacked on March 15, 2019.

The shooter discarded his now empty weapon and ran down the driveway back to his vehicle. He pulled the Ruger AR-15 from his car and fired three aimed shots at Abdul Aziz who was walking down the driveway from the direction of the mosque screaming at him.

Aziz dove in between parked vehicles to escape.

When the shooter walked back to the main entrance, several people were standing in the entranceway and further into the building. He shot Musa Patel and Linda Armstrong.

The gunman turned right, heading into the main prayer room, shooting Mohamad Mohamedhosen and at other worshippers before running out of ammunition. He dropped the weapon and ran back to his car.

Aziz [chased him up the driveway and yelled at him](#). The gunman removed the bayonet from his vest and held it in his hand.

Once in the vehicle, he reversed into Linwood Ave, heading east.

Aziz ran towards the gunman's vehicle carrying the discarded Uberti rifle. The shooter made a derogatory gesture with his left hand and yelled insults at Aziz.

Aziz threw the Uberti rifle at the gunman's vehicle, shattering a glass panel on the left rear side of the vehicle.

Seven people at the Linwood Islamic Centre died as a direct result of the gunman's actions.



GEORGE HEARD/STUFF/Stuff

Armed police on the streets of Christchurch following the March 15 shooting.

The arrest

The gunman drove east along Linwood Ave before turning right into Aldwins Rd and right on to Brougham St, where [police officers rammed his vehicle with a police car](#).

The terrorist did not resist as he was arrested.

When interviewed by police, he admitted going into both mosques intending to kill as many people as he could. He said he wanted to kill more people than he did and was on his way to Ashburton's mosque to carry out another attack when he was stopped.

He acknowledged the shootings were “terror attacks” and said they were motivated by his ideological beliefs. He said he intended to instil fear into the Muslim population or more generally non-European immigrants.

He admitted he started planning attacks on other New Zealand mosques before deciding on Christchurch.