

# Police were searching for teens behind San Diego mosque shooting before the bloodshed began

By **JULIE WATSON** and **EUGENE JOHNSON**  
*Associated Press*

weapons and her vehicle were missing from the family's home.

Two hours later, the shooting started at the Islamic Center of San Diego, which also houses a school.

The suspects, ages 17 and 18, were found in a vehicle after killing themselves near the site of the shooting.

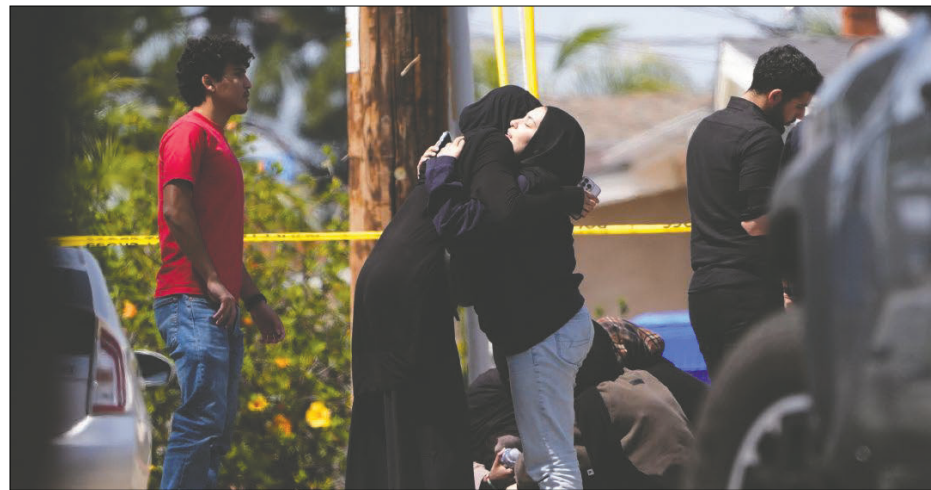
Authorities planned to execute search warrants Tuesday as they piece together how and why the attack happened. There was no specific threat against the Islamic center, which is the largest mosque in San Diego, but

authorities found that the suspects engaged in "generalized hate rhetoric," Wahl said, adding that the attack is being investigated as a hate crime.

Among those killed was a security guard who police believe "played a pivotal role" in keeping the attack from being "much worse," Wahl said.

"It's fair to say his actions were heroic," the chief said. "Undoubtedly he saved lives."

The mosque hasn't released the victims' names. But a family friend identified the guard as Amin Abdullah, who was well known at the mosque



GREGORY BULL / AP

People embrace near the scene of a shooting outside the Islamic Center of San Diego Monday in San Diego.

SAN DIEGO — Hours before an attack at a San Diego mosque that killed three men, including a security guard being hailed as a hero, police were racing to find the two teenagers who would ultimately be deemed responsible.

The search began after the mother of one of the teens reported that her son was suicidal and had run away, according to Police Chief Scott Wahl, who said

and had worked there for more than a decade.

"He wanted to defend the innocent so he decided to become a security guard," said Shaykh Uthman Ibn Farooq, who spoke with Abdullah's son.

The family could not immediately be reached for comment.

In a Facebook post, the mosque called him "a courageous man who put himself on the line of the safety of others, who even in his last moments did not stop protecting our community."

The center wrote that those who died "were men who put themselves on the line for our masjid and our community," using the Arabic word for mosque. "Men of courage, sacrifice, and faith. Their absence leaves a void that can never truly be filled."

It didn't provide details about the actions of the other two victims, but the

mosque described one as a foundation of the center who was dedicated to building the community from the beginning, and the other as a man whose "kindness, sincerity and wavering spirit touched everyone around him."

The shooting was the latest in a string of attacks on houses of worship and comes amid rising threats and hate crimes targeting the Muslim and Jewish communities since the beginning of war in the Middle East, forcing increases in security.

Just before the latest attack, the search for the missing teen intensified Monday morning as law enforcement began to gather more details. Police found he had dressed in camouflage and was with an acquaintance. Officers used automated license plate readers to track the car and went to a mall. They also alerted a school

where at least one of the teens was a student and interviewed the mother, Wahl said.

When reports of the shooting came in, police responded within four minutes of being called. Three men were dead when they arrived, Wahl said.

The mosque sits in a neighborhood of homes, apartments and strip malls with Middle Eastern restaurants and markets. The center includes the Al Rashid School, which offers courses in Arabic language, Islamic studies and the Quran for students ages 5 and up, according to its website.

The center, which said it was closed until further notice, typically holds five daily prayers. TV footage showed more than a dozen children holding hands and being walked out of the center's parking lot.

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### OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE UPDATING OF THE WARREN COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Warren County Steering Committee and the Barren River Area Development District will be conducting a public hearing concerning the update of the Goals and Objectives of the Warren County Strategic Plan. The hearing will be held on Thursday, June 4th, 2026, at the Barren River Area Development District (177 Graham Avenue Bowling Green, KY 42101) between 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. CST (6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. EST). The current plan can be viewed at [planning.bradd.org](http://planning.bradd.org).

Residents of Warren County are encouraged to drop by the public meeting to comment on their views and opinions. Comments can be made orally and/or in writing. If you cannot attend, written comments can be made to Judge Gorman, 429 E. 10th Street Suite 201 Bowling Green, KY 42101 on or before Thursday, June 4th, 2026.

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