

Deadly Shooting Erupts at Utah Church Funeral, Leaving 1 Dead

A funeral at a Utah church turned deadly Monday when gunfire erupted outside the building, leaving one man dead and two others critically injured.

The Aug. 17 shooting happened outside a meetinghouse of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Kearns, Utah, where family and friends had gathered for a funeral. According to KSL, police were already at the church when shots rang out shortly before 11:30 a.m.

Authorities had reportedly been warned beforehand that trouble could arise.

People associated with the funeral had contacted law enforcement and requested a police presence because of concerns surrounding the gathering, KSL reported. Officers were on the property when they heard the gunfire and immediately responded.

One of the victims, identified by KSL as 18-year-old Vilisoni Angilau, later died from his injuries. Two others were hospitalized in critical condition.

Police arrested 45-year-old Afuhia Masiu Manatau in connection with the shooting. KUTV reported that Manatau was booked into the Salt Lake County Jail on suspicion of first-degree felony murder and felony discharge of a firearm.



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According to KSL's reporting on police booking documents, witnesses told investigators that Manatau became involved in a physical confrontation with several people outside the church. Authorities allege Manatau produced a handgun during the altercation.

Investigators say Manatau's 17-year-old son then obtained the firearm. Witnesses told police that the teenager fired twice during the confrontation, according to KSL.

Unified Police said investigators believe the teenager shot two 18-year-old men before the victims fought back, gained control of the firearm and shot the teenager.

The surviving 18-year-old and Manatau's teenage son remained hospitalized in critical condition.

The violence prompted a wider security response throughout the area. Nearby schools were temporarily placed under secure protocol as authorities investigated, according to The Salt Lake Tribune. Intermountain Medical Center also implemented heightened security precautions while victims were being treated.

However, the circumstances surrounding the funeral add another tragic layer to the shooting.

Local News 8 reported that multiple people said the funeral was being held for 23-year-old Ofa'tangikivaha Angilau, who was killed in a separate shooting at a Riverton gas station Aug. 7.

As investigators continue working to establish exactly what happened, believers can pray for comfort for the grieving, healing for those fighting for their lives and peace in a community that has now experienced another devastating loss.

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