

Texas Synagogue Update: All Hostages Safe, Gunman Killed After Standoff

(For Charisma News' initial exclusive report and update on this story, please visit [this link](#)).

A man who held hostages for more than 10 hours Saturday at a Texas synagogue was shot and killed by FBI agents late Saturday night. One of the four hostages held at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville was released during the standoff; three others were rescued when authorities entered the building about 9 p.m., authorities said.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Matt DeSarno said a team would investigate "the shooting incident." An FBI and a police spokeswoman declined to answer questions about who shot the man.

During the standoff, the man could be heard ranting in a livestream and demanding the release of a Pakistani neuroscientist who was convicted of trying to kill U.S. Army officers in Afghanistan. DeSarno said the hostage taker was specifically focused on an issue not directly connected to the Jewish community and there was no immediate indication that the man had was part of any broader plan, but DeSarno said the agency's investigation "will have global reach."

Law enforcement officials who were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity earlier said that the hostage-taker demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani neuroscientist suspected of having ties to al-Qaida. He also said he wanted to be able to speak with her, according to the officials. Siddiqui is in federal prison in Texas.

DeSarno said Saturday night that the man had been identified “but we are not prepared to release his identity or confirm his identity at this time.”

A rabbi in New York City received a call from the rabbi believed to be held hostage in the synagogue to demand Siddiqui’s release, a law enforcement official said. The New York rabbi then called 911 .

Police were first called to the synagogue around 11 a.m. and people were evacuated from the surrounding neighborhood soon after that, FBI Dallas spokesperson Katie Chaumont said.

The services were being livestreamed on the synagogue’s Facebook page for a time. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reported that an angry man could be heard ranting and talking about religion at times during the livestream, which didn’t show what was happening inside the synagogue.

Shortly before 2 p.m., the man said, “You got to do something. I don’t want to see this guy dead.” Moments later, the feed cut out. A Meta company spokesperson later confirmed that Facebook removed the video.

Multiple people heard the hostage-taker refer to Siddiqui as his “sister” on the livestream, but Faizan Syed, the executive director of Council on American-Islamic Relations in Dallas Fort-Worth, Texas, told The Associated Press that Siddiqui’s brother, Mohammad Siddiqui, was not involved. Syed said CAIR’s support and prayers were with the people being held in the synagogue.

Texas resident Victoria Francis told the AP that she watched about an hour of the livestream before it cut out. She said she heard the man rant against America and claim he had a bomb.

“He was just all over the map. He was pretty irritated and the more irritated he got, he’d make more threats, like ‘I’m the

guy with the bomb. If you make a mistake, this is all on you.' And he'd laugh at that," she said. "He was clearly in extreme distress."

Francis, who grew up near Colleyville, tuned in after she read about the hostage situation. She said it sounded like the man was talking to the police department on the phone, with the rabbi and another person trying to help with the negotiations.

Colleyville, a community of about 26,000 people, is about 15 miles (23 kilometers) northeast of Fort Worth. The synagogue is nestled among large houses in a leafy residential neighborhood that includes several churches, a middle and elementary school and a horse farm.

Congregation Beth Israel is led by Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, who has been there since 2006 as the synagogue's first full-time rabbi. He has worked to bring a sense of spirituality, compassion and learning to the community, according to his biography.

Anna Salton Eisen, a founder and former president of the synagogue, said the congregation has about 140 members and Cytron-Walker has worked hard to build interfaith relationships in the community, including doing pulpit swaps and participating in a community peace walk. She described Saturday's events as "surreal."

"This is unlike anything we've ever experienced. You know, it's a small town and it's a small congregation," Eisen said as the hostage situation was ongoing. "No matter how it turns out it's hard to fathom how we will all be changed by this, because surely we will be."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki tweeted Saturday evening that President Joe Biden had been briefed and was receiving updates from senior officials.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said he was monitoring

the situation closely. "We pray for the safety of the hostages and rescuers," he wrote on Twitter.

CAIR, the nation's largest Muslim advocacy group, condemned the attack Saturday afternoon.

"This latest antisemitic attack at a house of worship is an unacceptable act of evil," CAIR National Deputy Director Edward Ahmed Mitchell said in a statement. "We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community. No cause can justify or excuse this crime."

However, Rabbi Marvin Hier and Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center espoused a different view of the hostage crisis in a statement released Saturday.

The demand for the release of convicted felon Dr Aafia Siddiqui is no coincidence. CAIR, Linda Sarsour and other prominent "Activists" have been deeply involved in casting a criminal as a human rights victim. Further, at her trial in 2008, she demanded that no Jews be on her jury and made continuous anti-Semitic comments. It is no accident a Synagogue was chosen for this attack. We assume that US authorities and experts are investigating all the ties and communications leading up to today's outrage. We pray that Texas law enforcement and other agencies will continue to do whatever they can to gain the release of incidents. Meanwhile, once again synagogues and Jewish schools must again elevate their defensive measure not only against neo-Nazis but Islamist terrorism and all violent hate. {eo}

There are a lot of unknowns in Texas. Here are some things we do know. 1) In November, CAIR, the council on American Islamic Relations called for the release of Pakistani National Dr. Aafia Siddiqui who is currently imprisoned in Texas.

– Daniella Greenbaum Davis (@DGreenbaum) January 15, 2022

Bulk of this story © 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Follow breaking news like this on our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.