

Attacker stabs nine people at apartment complex housing refugees in Boise, Idaho

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Nine people, including six children, were hurt in an attack carried out by a knife-wielding assailant in an apartment complex housing refugee families in Boise, Idaho, on Saturday night. Four of the nine are reported to be battling life-threatening injuries. Within hours, the police arrested Timothy Earl Kinner, a 30-year-old man from Los Angeles, California, for carrying out the attack. Kinner was booked into Ada county jail early Sunday morning on nine counts of aggravated battery and six felony charges of injury to a child.

According to the Boise police department, the number of victims was the most in a single incident in the city's history. As of now, officials have not released much information about the victims or the motive behind the attack. Police Chief William Bones told reporters that responding officers had found the victims in the parking lot as well as inside the apartment complex. The victims, Bones stated, included "members of the refugee community," and that their "age range varies dramatically."

Wylie Street Station Apartments—the scene of the crime—offers low-income family rentals under a US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program that limits rent payments to 30 percent of a renter's income. It is run by Northwest Real Estate Capital Corp., a Boise nonprofit that specializes in low-income housing. The apartment complex has also housed a large number of refugees.

Based on unofficial statements from family, friends and neighbors in the apartment complex, reports have indicated that the victims include an Iraqi woman and her children, as well as members of a Syrian family. The attack reportedly took place at a three-year-old's birthday party. Julianne D. Tzul, the executive director of the International Rescue Committee, told the *Idaho Statesman*, "We are shocked and saddened by this

senseless attack on members of the Boise refugee community...This attack does not reflect, in any way, the tremendous welcoming nature of the Boise community we have worked with so closely..."

While the Idaho Office for Refugees, opened in the 1970s, was initially meant to help resettle people fleeing the overthrow of US-supported governments in Southeast Asia, recent refugee arrivals to Idaho include large numbers from Iraq, Congo, Burma, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Somalia. Many of these have been settled in apartment complexes like the one on Wylie Street Station.

The city of 220,000 people, dubbed "Treasure Valley," has generally been welcoming of the refugee population. In fact, the attack took place just a few hours after thousands had gathered downtown in support of a "Families Belong Together" rally protesting against the Trump administration's cruel and inhumane treatment of immigrants.

Little information has come out about the assailant or his motives. Some of the news reports on the attack mention the fact that Kinner, though not a refugee, had been a temporary resident of the apartment complex until he was asked to move out on Friday, the day before the attack.

The attack takes place in the context of fascistic threats and racist rants directed against immigrants from Donald Trump. Last week, Trump tweeted, "We cannot allow all of these people to invade our Country. When somebody comes in, we must immediately, with no judges or court cases, bring them back from where they came. Our system is a mockery to good immigration policy and Law and Order."

By scapegoating immigrants, the government is creating a climate in which such anti-immigrant attacks are to be expected. Similar maneuvers are being

conducted by the ruling classes of Europe. In Italy, the Five Star-Lega coalition government has issued belligerent anti-immigrant denunciations and have encouraged physical assaults against immigrants from Africa and the Middle East.

What cannot be denied is that mounting social tensions have made an already vulnerable section of the population even more so. The callousness and absolute disregard for basic human dignity shown by the US government in its treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers, not to mention the vile rhetoric that emanates daily from official sources including but not limited to the White House, have contributed to an environment where such acts of violence will worsen unless it is brought to an end by a unified movement of the working class.



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