

# Gunman kills 10 people during Los Angeles-area Chinese New Year celebration

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On Saturday night, a gunman opened fire at party-goers at Star Dance Studio in Monterey Park, California, killing 10 and wounding at least 10 more. Those in attendance were celebrating Lunar New Year's Eve at the studio in a Los Angeles area suburb with a majority of residents of either Chinese or Asian descent.

Police claim they began receiving calls about the shooting around 10:20 p.m. The Monterey Park Police Department is located less than half a mile from the Star Dance Studio, but police did not arrive on the scene in time to stop the mass killing.

The alleged shooter was apparently able to escape and threaten another nearby dance hall free from police interference.

Lunar New Year celebrations, scheduled to last throughout Sunday, were immediately canceled citywide after the shooting. In major cities throughout the United States, including Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Baltimore and New York, Lunar New Year parties proceeded under heavy police supervision.

After a massive police manhunt, a white van matching descriptions provided by witnesses was breached by a police SWAT team Sunday afternoon in the coastal Los Angeles-area city of Torrance. The vehicle's driver, whom police allege was the gunman, was found slumped over the steering wheel, dead from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

Police identified the dead man and alleged shooter as 72-year-old Huu Can Tran. However, the motive for the killings is yet to be revealed.

Police are investigating a possible connection between the Monterey Park shooting and an incident

that same night in the neighboring city of Alhambra. According to reports, 17 minutes after the Monterey Park shooting, an individual, described as an armed Asian male, walked into the Lai Lai dance hall in Alhambra, whereupon he was disarmed by the dance hall patrons and thereafter fled from the scene in a white cargo van similar to the van found in Torrance. No one was killed or injured during the Alhambra incident.

"We are aware of an incident that occurred in Alhambra, and we have investigators on the scene trying to determine if there is a connection," said Captain Andrew Meyer of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department during a press conference Sunday morning.

While it is too early to determine the motive for the Monterey Park killings, they took place within the context of a wave of violence against Asian Americans, and Chinese Americans, in particular. At a Sunday morning press conference, Los Angeles Sheriff Robert Luna relayed to reporters, "Somebody called one of those hospitals [treating the 10 individuals injured in the shooting] to say something along the lines that they 'want to go and finish the job.'"

In the state of California alone, crimes committed against Asian Americans rose by 177.5 percent between 2020 and 2021, while the percentage of the state's hate crimes based on race involving Asian Americans rose from 8 percent to 21 percent during the same period.

Saturday's mass shooting is the deadliest in the US since the elementary school massacre in Uvalde, Texas, last May, resulting in the deaths of 19 children and two teachers. In total, there were 647 mass shootings in the United States in 2022, according to records kept by the *Gun Violence Archive*, which defines a mass shooting as an event in which four or more people, not

including the shooter, are either shot or killed. Over 44,000 Americans died after being shot with a gun last year, with over half of those, 24,090, using a gun to commit suicide.

Three weeks into the year 2023, the archive has already recorded 36 mass shootings, more than one a day. Over 2,500 people have already died from gunshots, including over 1,100 homicides/murders.

The incident in Monterey Park is the deadliest mass shooting in California since the 2018 Thousand Oaks dance club shooting that claimed the lives of 12 people and wounded a further 25.

Following the shooting, Vice President Kamala Harris, a California native, released a statement with her husband, Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff, saying the pair was “mourning for those who were killed, as we pray for those who are injured, and as we grieve for those many people whose lives are forever changed.”

President Biden tweeted on Sunday, “Jill and I are praying for those killed and injured in last night’s deadly mass shooting in Monterey Park.” The president has not said anything about the incident since, with his account tweeting a mere hour afterwards about actress Aubrey Plaza’s guest-hosting appearance on “Saturday Night Live.”



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