

# Death toll in Monterey Park, California dance studio massacre climbs to 11

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23 January 2023

A critically wounded victim injured during Saturday night's Monterey Park, California, massacre died at the Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center on Monday, driving the death toll from the mass shooting up to 11.

In a statement issued Monday by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services on behalf of the hospital, the county said that one of the three victims at the hospital remains in serious condition while two other patients are recovering. At least three other victims are still being treated in local hospitals according to media reports.

Twenty people were shot at the Star Ballroom Dance Studio Saturday night amid Lunar New Year celebrations being carried out by the predominately Asian community east of downtown Los Angeles. As of this writing, Saturday's killings mark the deadliest mass shooting in California since the 2018 Thousand Oaks shooting which left 12 people dead, and the largest mass shooting since the slaughter of 19 children and two school teachers in Uvalde, Texas, last year.

In a press conference Monday, California Governor Gavin Newsom said he met with some of the victims of the shooting at a local hospital. Newsom described talking with a victim in the ICU with "shattered bones ... that might not make it."

"And while that young man is in the bed with shattered bones, he's saying, 'How many days do I have to be here because I can't afford this hospital? How many days am I going to be here because I'm scared I'm gonna lose my job in the warehouse? Can you help me?'" quickly adding, "So I've met with the victims and their families. And I hope we remember those folks too. Not just the people that died."

Despite Newsom and his fellow Democrats in the state legislature maintaining a supermajority, California, the fourth-largest economy in the world, like every other state in the US does not have single-payer guaranteed medical

coverage for every resident.

On Monday, the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner identified two of the women killed in the shooting at the Star Dance Studio; My Nhan, 65, and Lilan Li, 63. The coroner said that all the deceased were in their 50s, 60s and 70s.

In a statement put out by the Nhan and Quan family, My Nhan, affectionately known as "Mymy," was described as a "loving aunt, sister, daughter and friend. Mymy was our biggest cheerleader."

"She spent so many years going to the dance studio in Monterey Park on weekends. It's what she loved to do. But unfairly, Saturday was her last dance."

On Sunday, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department reported that Huu Can Tran, 72, was the chief suspect in the shooting at the Star Dance studio. According to police, late Sunday morning Tran was found dead in a van from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in Torrance, roughly 30 miles from the Lai Lai Ballroom & Studio, where Tran had attempted a second mass shooting after fleeing from the Monterey Park shooting. Police said on Sunday that they recovered a pistol in the van where Tran's body was found.

That Saturday's killings did not result in significantly more fatalities is due entirely to the heroic actions of those participating in the event at the Lai Lai dance hall.

In an interview with *Good Morning America*, 26-year-old Brandon Tsay confirmed that as the evening's celebrations were wrapping up at the Lai Lai Ballroom in Alhambra, Tsay saw the gunman, later identified as Tran, walk into the studio and begin "looking around the room" as if he were "looking for targets."

Tsay, who helps run the ballroom with his family, said he saw Tran start "prepping the weapon and something came over me. I realized I needed to get the weapon away from him. I needed to take this weapon, disarm him or else everybody would have died." Tsay, who at the time

was not aware of the shootings at the Star Dance Studio, described struggling to disarm Tran: “He was hitting me across the face, bashing the back of my head.”

Tsay, covered in bruises, described taking the gun away from Tran at which point he told Tran to “get the hell out of here” or else he would shoot him. “I thought he would run away, but he was just standing there contemplating whether to fight or to run,” Tsay recalled. “I really thought I would have to shoot him and he came at me. This is when he turned around and walked out the door, jogged back to his van. I immediately called police with the gun still in my hand.”

Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna, who identified Tran as the shooter Sunday, said Tran “intended to kill more people.” Referring to the actions of Tsay, Luna said, “They saved lives. This could have been much worse.”

The gun used in Saturday’s killings was identified by Luna on Monday as the Military Armament Corporation Model 10, or MAC-10, 9mm semi-automatic pistol. The weapon used by Tran had an extended magazine, capable of holding up to 30 rounds. Originally designed for the US military in 1964, the civilian version of the weapon was included in the 1994 US Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in 2004.

In a Sunday press conference, Luna said that he believes the weapon was not legal to own in California, which has some of the more restrictive gun laws in the United States.

Police have yet to release a motive in the shooting, however, on Monday it was revealed that Tran, who lived in a mobile home retirement community in Hemet, California, over 80 miles from the dance studios, had twice recently visited the Hemet Police Department to report serious allegations against his family members.

According to police, Tran first visited the Hemet Police station on January 7, 2023, and again on January 9, 2023. According to police, in each instance Tran alleged that his family members had stolen money from him and were in fact, trying to poison him. After each visit the police refused to do a follow-up or further investigation, despite the fact that Tran was making serious allegations indicative of either abuse, or a mental health crisis.

On Monday morning investigators executed search warrants on Tran’s home where they said they found more evidence linking him to both dance studios.

An anonymous police source, speaking to *Los Angeles* magazine, said that the initial investigation appeared to indicate that Tran’s rampage was a severe case of domestic violence. The law enforcement source

told the publication that Tran was “looking for his wife.”

“There is increasing evidence this was domestic violence,” the source said.

In an interview with CNN, Tran’s ex-wife, who did not reveal her name and was not one of the victims of Saturday’s shootings, said that she met her ex-husband at the Star Dance Studio and that Tran taught lessons there nightly in the early 2000s. After a brief marriage, Tran’s ex-wife said he filed for divorce in 2005.

She said her husband was not violent, but quick to anger, and that Tran had emigrated from China. She said he lived in the San Gabriel neighborhood, roughly five minutes from the dance studio, for two decades before moving to Hamlin.

Another former friend of Tran’s interviewed by CNN also said that before Tran moved to Hemet, he would go to the dance studio “almost every night.” In another indication of possibly deteriorating mental health, the former friend told CNN that Tran would often complain that other instructors at the dance hall did not like him and said “evil things about him.”

Twenty-three days into the new year, the *Gun Violence Archive*, which tracks gun deaths and mass shootings in the United States (characterized as four or more victims, not including the shooter), has recorded 37 mass shootings, or roughly 1.6 per day.

While not technically a “mass shooting,” on Monday in Des Moines, Iowa, at least two students were killed and a teacher remains in critical condition after a shooting at “Starts Right Here,” a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization that provides education to “at-risk” students in the state’s capital.

In a press conference Monday, Sergeant Paul Parizek with the Des Moines Police Department said that three suspects believed to have been involved in the shooting were taken into custody. “The incident was definitely targeted. It was not random,” Parizek said.



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