

Two Uvalde police officers indicted for failed response to Robb Elementary School mass shooting

Kevin Reed
30 June 2024

More than two years after the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, in which law enforcement officers stood by for 77 minutes while a gunman continued shooting students and teachers, a grand jury has indicted the former school district police chief and another former officer on multiple felony charges.

On Thursday, the grand jury handed down indictments against former Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Police Chief Pete Arredondo and former school police Officer Adrian Gonzales.

The officers are the first to be criminally charged for the catastrophic response of the police on May 24, 2022, when 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, a former student at Robb Elementary, entered a fourth grade classroom and proceeded to kill 19 children, ages 9 and 10, and two teachers and injure 17 others.

Arredondo, 52, surrendered himself to the Uvalde Texas Rangers on Thursday and was booked on 10 counts of child endangerment and known criminal negligence. Uvalde jail officials confirmed his booking. After bail was set at \$10,000 surety bond and nine \$10,000 personal recognizance bonds, the former police chief posted bail and was released.

The indictment asserts that in his role as the police chief of the school district and as incident commander during the shooting, Arredondo “intentionally, knowingly, recklessly and with criminal negligence” placed 10 children in “imminent danger of bodily injury, death, physical impairment and mental impairment.”

The indictment claims the chief heard shots fired in a classroom and “failed to identify the incident as an

active shooter incident, failed to respond as trained to an active shooter incident, and instead called for SWAT, thereby delaying the response by law enforcement officers.”

The indictment alleges that Arredondo directed law enforcement officers to evacuate the wing before confronting the shooter, failed to determine if the door to classroom 111 was locked, and failed to “timely provide keys and breaching tools to enter classrooms 111 and 112.”

Gonzales, 51, was booked and released from jail Friday, according to the Uvalde County Sheriff’s Office. The indictment states that Gonzales was charged with 29 felony counts of abandoning or endangering a child because he allegedly placed 29 children “in imminent danger” of injury or death.

The indictment also states that Gonzales heard gunshots and was advised of the general location of the shooter at Robb Elementary. The indictment alleges that the officer failed to engage, distract, delay or impede the shooter until after the gunman had entered classrooms 111 and 112 and fired his weapon at children, and the officer failed to follow his active-shooting training by not moving toward the gunfire.

As several official investigations determined, although there were 376 police officers on the scene at Robb Elementary School, there was a failure of law enforcement “at every level.” The shooter was permitted to fire his AR-15-style assault rifle more than 100 times before police intervened and killed him.

The one fact that the investigations have chosen not to highlight about the events of that day is that the officers—instead of moving against the shooter—were preoccupied with manhandling and brutalizing parents,

who had assembled outside the school, were horrified by the inaction of police and were attempting to force their way into the classroom to save their children themselves.

The indictments on Thursday were the result of an investigation mounted by the Uvalde County District Attorney that culminated in the decision to empanel a grand jury on October 25, 2022, five months after the mass shooting. It took another 20 months before the grand jury brought the indictments.

Throughout this process, parents and family members in the working class community of Uvalde have been stonewalled by school officials and local, state and federal politicians as to who would be held responsible for the horrific deaths of so many young children.

In part, the indictment of Arredondo and Gonzales—who should be held responsible for the on-scene response to the mass shooting—is an effort to blame the entirety of the failed mass shooting response on two local school district police officers while shielding others, such as officers with the Texas Department of Public Safety who were also present on that day.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact