

Mass shooting at Pennsylvania hospital leaves 2 people dead and 6 injured

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On Saturday, a man opened fire at a hospital in Shiloh, Pennsylvania, leaving two people dead and six injured. The shooter was identified as Diogenes Archangel-Ortiz, a 49-year-old resident of York County.

The shooting took place at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Memorial (UPMC), part of the network of hospitals under the University of Pittsburgh. The hospital houses an intensive care unit, which is where the shooting took place.

The two killed in Saturday's shooting were Archangel-Ortiz and a West York Borough police officer, Andrew Duarte. Archangel-Ortiz had a non-violent criminal record, with court documents indicating that he had been charged with harassment in 2016 and was arrested for driving with a suspended license on February 13, just nine days prior to the shooting.

The six people injured, none of whom were identified, include two police officers, a doctor, a nurse, a custodian and a staff member who was injured in a fall. They are all in stable condition.

No official motive for the shooting has been given. Little background information has been offered about the gunman. York County District Attorney Tim Barker stated that Archangel-Ortiz had been at UPMC's intensive care unit earlier in the week to visit a patient he knew. Archangel-Ortiz allegedly had disagreements with medical staff at the time regarding the treatment of the unknown individual.

Archangel-Ortiz walked into the hospital at around 10:35 a.m. on Saturday carrying a bag that contained zip ties and a handgun. He headed to the intensive care unit, where he opened fire on staff and took people hostage. He shot at hospital security when they attempted to intervene.

Police went into formation to confront Archangel-Ortiz but had to retreat as the gunman held a hostage at gunpoint. At this point, according to Barker, the officers were "left with no recourse, [and] opened fire." During the exchange of gunfire, three police officers were struck, with Duarte's wounds being fatal. Archangel-Ortiz was fatally shot.

Barker called the officers' actions justified "beyond any and all doubt," adding that "they needed to use deadly force." Much of Barker's press conference was dedicated to providing legal justifications for the officers' decision to open fire. Official accounts indicate that Archangel-Ortiz came out into the hospital hallway with the hostage at gunpoint when police opened fire.

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro (D) spoke at the same press conference, praising the police department and repeating its justifications for the police response. He also extended thanks to President Donald Trump for his "concern" for the community.

In the media commentary, nothing has been said about the political and social roots of mass shootings in the US. In Shiloh, where UPMC is located, the per capita income for an individual is just \$23,625, nearly \$14,000 lower than the national average. According to the United Way, as of 2018, 37 percent of York County's residents were deficient in at least one category of ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed).

The official indifference to the lives of working people, most clearly demonstrated in governments allowing COVID-19 to rip through communities unchecked, is just one expression of a general social catastrophe that lurks just under the surface of communities around the world, and particularly in the US, the world's richest country.

These conditions are the result of bipartisan policies of war, austerity and subordination to a financial oligarchy. Democrats, including Shapiro, have largely dropped their criticisms of Trump and pledged their collaboration with his administration as it carries out a wrecking operation against social programs and federal jobs.

Just this year alone there have already been 47 mass shootings across the United States, and since 2013 there have been nearly 6,600. Mass shootings have been on the rise internationally as well. Just this month in Sweden, a gunman killed 10 people at Risbergska community school in Örebro.

The ruling class has no solution to the plague of mass shootings and will instead divert attention from their root cause, the capitalist system, and instead call for heavier policing and nostrums such as gun reform, while placing the blame entirely on the immediate perpetrators.



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