

# Australia: Governments, police prepare a cover-up of Bondi shootings

Peter Symonds  
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It is becoming increasingly evident that the official response to the terrorist attack on a Jewish gathering at Bondi Beach, Sydney, last Sunday that left 15 people dead is a cover-up for the federal and state governments and the police and intelligence agencies, particularly the domestic Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and New South Wales (NSW) Premier Chris Minns along with top police and intelligence officials, have stepped in with daily press conferences to fashion a narrative that protects the interests of their governments and the state apparatus. The limited information fed to the media is riddled with contradictions, leaving more questions than it answers.

The two alleged gunman—Sajid Akram, 50, and his son, Naveed Akram, 24—carried out a planned, targeted attack on a “Chanukah by the Sea” event for children, marking the start of the eight-day Rabbinic Jewish festival of lights and involving hundreds of people.

Ten of the 15 shot dead have been named, including a 10-year-old girl, Matilda Britvan, Holocaust survivor Alexander Kleytman, local rabbi Eli Schlanger, Holocaust survivor Marika Pogany, a young Israeli-Australian Dan Elkayam, an elderly man Tibor Weitzen and former NSW police officer Peter Meagher. Another 24 are in hospital, including two police officers.

The exact motives for the attack remain unclear—Sajid Akram was killed by police at the scene and Naveed Akram was critically injured and remains in hospital under police guard. The presence of Islamic State (IS) flags in their vehicle and the past association of Naveed Akram with right-wing Islamic extremists point to an ideologically-motivated attack targeting Jewish people.

Whatever the reasoning, there is absolutely nothing progressive about terrorist acts like that at Bondi Beach, which is being seized on to strengthen the capitalist state, above all against the working class. The attack took place amid the ongoing genocide of Palestinians that has claimed at least 60,000 lives and transformed the Gaza Strip into a wasteland. But Jewish people in Australia are not responsible for the actions of the Zionist regime in Israel; many have publicly opposed the slaughter in Gaza.

The first glaring contradiction about the events on Bondi Beach is the absence of police from the scene, even as state and federal governments aggressively promoted the lie that protests against Israeli genocide are “antisemitic” and stepped up police protection of synagogues and Jewish community events.

Yet the Akrams, armed with four high-powered rifles, were able to step from their car, mount a footbridge near the festival and fire at least 100 rounds into the crowd before being brought down by police fire. In fact the first shots were fired as they left their car after an elderly couple—Boris and Sofia Gurman—on seeing the IS flags and the guns, wrestled a rifle from Sajid Akram but were shot dead.

An eyewitness has posted a video of the two alleged gunmen as they stood upright on the footbridge firing at will into the crowd. Two minutes passed and a voice was heard to exclaim, “Where are the police?” A police vehicle went by without stopping. Sirens sounded. Then after the Akrams were shot, a handful of police began to appear. In all, the shooting episode lasted some eight to nine minutes.

Premier Minns claimed that three police were on duty at the Jewish festival. But no details of when they were there, what they were doing or how they responded have been released. As the recently appointed NSW Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon came under pressure from reporters at a press conference yesterday, Minns stepped in to aggressively defend police actions but provided no details, repeating the mantra that an investigation had to proceed.

However, the lack of police left it up to courageous unarmed individuals to take action. Boris and Sofia Gurman were not the only ones. At one point, Sajid Akram moved off the footbridge toward the crowd in the park but Ahmed Al-Ahmed, a 43-year-old small local business owner originally from Syria, wrestled the rifle away from him. Al-Ahmed is in hospital with wounds to his left arm. A businessman, Reuven Morrison, hurled bricks at Sajid Akram as he returned to the footbridge but was shot dead.

Many questions remain about the background of the Akrams. Indian police have confirmed that Sajid Akram came to Australia from Hyderabad in India, married and had a daughter and son, Naveed. In the aftermath of the Bondi Beach shootings, a massive police raid was conducted on the family

home in the western Sydney suburb of Bonnyrigg involving a military style vehicle, a helicopter and heavily-armed officers.

ASIO has acknowledged that Naveed Akram had been investigated in October 2019 because of his association with two men convicted of terrorism offences stemming from their support for Islamic State (IS). One was Isaak El Matari, who was arrested in July 2019 and jailed for seven years for plotting an IS attack. The other was Radwan Dakkak, who was also arrested in July 2019 and charged with being a member of a terrorist organisation.

In 2019, Naveed, who was aged 17 or 18 at the time, was filmed taking part in the “Street Dawah Movement”—an Islamist street preaching group that spoke particularly to youth at train stations around Sydney about Islam. Yet after six months, ASIO claimed that it ended its surveillance of Naveed Akram, considering that he did not pose a threat.

Police Commissioner Lanyon initially claimed that Sajid Akram had been granted a firearms licence in 2015—that is, prior to his son coming to ASIO’s attention. Yesterday, Lanyon changed his story. The initial 2015 application had lapsed as a photo had not been supplied. A second application in 2020 was granted in 2023. Sajid Akram bought six high-powered rifles—four of which were used at Bondi Beach and two more that were found at an Airbnb rental flat in the Sydney suburb of Campsie.

The obvious question is why the police had granted the gun licence. In 2019, Sajid Akram had also been interviewed by ASIO. In the course of the past two decades, governments massively increased the budget and powers of ASIO as part of the bogus “war on terror.” Its annual budget is now more than \$700 million, up from around \$400 million just over a decade ago. It now has a staff of more than 2,000.

If the gun licence did not raise alarm bells, then the lead-up to Sunday’s shootings should have, and possibly did. Several reports said Naveed Akram left his job as a bricklayer, claiming that he had broken his wrist boxing. Last month he and his father travelled to the Philippines, where immigration authorities confirmed they arrived on November 1, with their final destination listed as Davao on the southern island of Mindanao, then left the country on November 28.

Mindanao, with its largely Muslim population, has had a long-running separatist insurgency that has included at times armed Islamic extremist groups, including one associated with IS. While the Australian media have jumped to the conclusion that the Akrams received training from an Islamist group, Philippine authorities and the Philippine media have reported no information about their activities in the country.

However, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) cited “a senior counter-terrorism official, speaking on condition of anonymity,” as saying that the Akrams underwent “militant training” in the southern Philippines. Again, obvious questions remain unanswered: Who provided the training, when and where? What did it consist of? Just as importantly, who

informed Australian counter-terrorism and when?

ASIO, the Australian Federal Police and Australia’s foreign intelligence agency, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) all have extensive networks of agents and informants, in South East Asia in particular.

It is just over three weeks since the Akrams returned to Australia to plan and carry out their terrorist attack. The father and son told family members that they were leaving for a fishing trip. They loaded up their guns and moved into the Campsie rental apartment, closer to the city. To date, the police claim that no one else was directly involved in Sunday’s shootings.

Already, as indicated, gaps have begun to appear in the official story. But perhaps the most glaring hole is the claim that between October 2019 and December 2025, Sajid and Naveed Akram just dropped off the radar of police and intelligence agencies. It is simply not credible and, even as the police and ASIO close ranks, more evidence is likely to emerge.

A fall-back position is quickly emerging in the media—the slaughter was the result of an “intelligence failure.” A few heads may roll but the general thrust is for a further huge boost in powers and budgets of the police and intelligence forces, tougher gun laws and greater surveillance. This is all based on the lie that anti-Zionism and opposition to the genocide equals hatred of Jews, designed to justify the suppression of any opposition to the crimes of the Israeli government.

The working class should treat the heavily filtered allegations being fed to the corporate media by governments, the police and intelligence agencies with great suspicion. What is needed is an independent fully public inquiry into the shootings. Workers should not only condemn the shootings but reject all forms of reactionary communal politics—including that of the reactionary Islamist sects and frothing Zionist lobby groups. The working class must unite to defend Jewish, Islamic and other targeted communities, and oppose the assault on basic democratic rights and the plunge toward war.



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