

Australia: Unanswered questions about the Bondi Beach shootings

Peter Symonds

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The trickle of information from the police regarding the Bondi Beach shootings continues to raise more questions than it answers. It leaves huge gaps not only in what happened in the immediate weeks preceding the terrorist attack but in the background of the two alleged gunmen—Sajid Akram, 50, and his son, Naveed Akram, 24.

On Sunday December 14, the Akrams armed with two shotguns and a rifle allegedly opened fire on hundreds of people attending a “Chanukah by the Sea” event at Sydney’s Bondi Beach marking the start of the Jewish Hanukkah festival. Fourteen people were killed on the spot while another later died in hospital and another 40 were injured.

Police shot and killed Sajid Akram. His son was shot in the stomach and survived in a critical condition. He was charged last week on 59 counts, including 15 of murder, 40 of attempted murder and one of committing a terrorist act, and has been transferred to Sydney’s Long Bay jail.

A court this week released a redacted version of police documents related to the formal charging of Naveed Akram which had been placed under an interim suppression order last week. The new order was only made after an application backed by several media outlets.

While the detail provided is limited, the police documents make it clear that the terrorist shootings were planned at least two months in advance. Yet the police and intelligence agencies claim that they had no knowledge of what was about to unfold on December 14, even though the domestic intelligence agency, ASIO, had in 2019–20 carried out a six-month investigation of Naveed Akram’s associations with groups influenced by the terrorist Islamic State (IS) organisation.

Naveed’s iPhone, seized by police after the attack, contained videos taken in October of him and his father armed with shotguns carrying out that the police describe as “firearms training in a countryside location, suspected to be in NSW.” A video shows them “firing shotguns and moving in a tactical manner.”

Father and son lived in the family home in the western Sydney suburb of Bonnyrigg. However, on October 20, they rented a room in Campsie through Airbnb from December 2 to 21, which the police describe as “a staging post” closer to Bondi Beach to prepare the attack. Police subsequently raided the premises where they found various items, including a rifle, a shotgun, numerous firearm parts, a suspected Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and bomb-making equipment.

When the Akrams moved into the room in Campsie is not stated. They had reportedly told the family that they were going on a fishing trip. Late on the night of December 12 they conducted a reconnoitre of the Bondi Beach areas, including the footbridge from which they fired on the Jewish gathering two days later.

The police documents establish that the two men loaded their car in the early hours of December 14 then travelled to Bondi Beach in the afternoon. However, little detail is provided of the actual shootings, including the number of police on duty at the event, what actions they took, when other police arrived and which police shot the Akrams.

New South Wales (NSW) state Premier Chris Minns has stated that just three police were on duty, despite the fact that Minns himself and the media and political establishment have been denouncing the so-called growth of “antisemitism” in a bid to vilify and outlaw sustained protests against the Israeli regime’s genocide in Gaza. Two police were among the wounded.

The Akrams threw several IEDs toward the gathering, which failed to explode, then opened fire using a Beretta rifle and two shotguns. The lack of police on the spot left it to the courageous acts of unarmed civilians to try to prevent the killings. Sajid Akram was disarmed twice—once by an elderly couple who were shot dead, and a second time by a local business owner.

Two Islamic State flags were displayed on Naveed Akram’s car where the police also seized two iPhones and a large IED. The fact that the terrorist attack was motivated by the reactionary ideology of Islamic State was reportedly confirmed by a video found on Naveed’s phone, along with that of their training in rural area. Neither video has been released and it has not been explained why they have been withheld.

The police document states that the video explaining their attack was recorded in October, showing the two men sitting in front of an image of an IS flag and with four long-arm firearms and ammunition in the background. After Naveed Akram recites a passage from the Quran in Arabic, the two men speak in English, about “their motivation for the ‘Bondi attack’ and condemning the acts of ‘Zionists.’”

“In this video, the Accused and S.AKRAM recite their political and religious views and appear to summarise their justification for the Bondi terrorist attack,” the document states, but no detail is provided.

Even though they are responsible for licensing firearms, the NSW police have provided no explanation as to why Sajid Akram

was given a gun licence after his son had come under ASIO investigation in 2019. Sajid Akram was also reportedly questioned by ASIO. The application for the licence was made in 2020, but only granted in 2023 and used to purchase six weapons.

The number of weapons and type should also have raised suspicion, given the owner lived in suburban Sydney. Moreover, three of the six were the same type and model of shotgun purchases—a clear indication that the guns were not simply for personal use. Both the shotguns and the Beretta rifle, while not automatic or semi-automatic weapons, were capable of relatively rapid fire.

Also unexplained is a report in the *Daily Telegraph* that Naveed Akram was given a Class 1 Security Licence in August 2024, enabling him to work as an unarmed security guard and to monitor security systems. Less than a year later, in June 2025, the licence was revoked. The police, who issue the licences, have not explained why.

Premier Minns has promised a state-based royal commission into the Bondi Beach terrorist attack. Far from establishing the truth, such a royal commission will simply give a judicial imprimatur to the cover-up that is well underway into the responsibility of the NSW police for what took place at Bondi Beach on December 14.

The federal Labor government of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is also under pressure to hold a royal commission into the shootings. Albanese, who is under fire from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the opposition Liberal-National Coalition and the media, for his supposed weak response and failure to crack down on “antisemitism,” has so far refused to call such an inquiry.

Rather than “weakness,” Albanese’s opposition is likely motivated by other considerations. A federal royal commission, unlike a state-based one, would be compelled to examine the role of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), ASIO and the foreign intelligence agency, ASIS, in relation to the Bondi Beach attack. While hearings would almost certainly be held behind closed doors, a royal commission could uncover unwelcome facts about what the police and intelligence agencies knew about the Akrams prior to December 14. All these agencies have been greatly expanded over the past two decades as part of the bogus “war on terror.”

It is simply not credible that the AFP, ASIO and ASIS knew nothing about the evolution of Naveed Akram from a 19- or 20-year-old youth in 2019, associated with two men convicted of terrorism offences stemming from their support for Islamic State, into a terrorist capable of gunning down innocent people in the name of its reactionary ideology.

If nothing else, the trip in November made by the Akrams to Davao City on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, known for the activities of Islamist extremists, including those associated with Islamic State, is an obvious red flag. In 2017, armed Islamists took over the city of Marawi and fought a bloody five-month battle before Philippine armed forces finally recaptured it.

While an unnamed senior counter-intelligence official told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) that the Akrams received “militant training” in Mindanao, no details were provided. Both the Philippine and Australian police and

intelligence agencies are determined to keep a lid on the activities of the two alleged Bondi Beach gunmen. Philippine national security adviser Eduardo Año claims that the Akrams never left Davao nor received military-style training in the country.

Philippine immigration officials have confirmed that the Akrams were in the Philippines from November 1 to 28 and visited Davao. The only other information has been provided by various journalists who have travelled to Mindanao. The Akrams stayed in the cheap GV Hotel where staff said they spent most of their time in their room. Visits included to a gun shop, where nothing was bought, an Islamic centre, an ATM and a beachside resort, according to a police source cited by the ABC.

A unnamed senior police investigator told the ABC that the pair may have travelled out of the city, citing the fact that a cell phone they used was detected twice in other areas, including M’lang in North Cotabato that border areas where Islamic extremists are still thought to be operating. While too brief to receive “militant training,” the most likely explanation for a month-long stay in a dingy hotel room was to receive Islamic State blessing for the planned terrorist attack.

Whether to receive “militant training” or obtain formal IS approval, Naveed and Sajid Akram must have had connections prior to leaving for the Philippines. Levi West, an Australian National University research fellow, told the ABC: “You can’t just go to the southern Philippines and show up at an IS-run training camp and ask; there’s a level of connectivity and a set of relationships that you would need to have in place.”

That leads back to Australia, as neither of the Akrams had previously travelled to the Philippines. How could the two have established connections to an affiliated IS organisation in Mindanao without organised assistance in Sydney? That only puts a big question mark above ASIO’s claim that after the 2019 investigation Naveed Akram was not considered to pose a security threat.

The official narrative is fundamentally flawed. A cover-up is underway to shield the police and intelligence agencies. Any “deficiencies” exposed in official investigations will be exploited to justify a further major boost to the state security apparatus.



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