

3 dead in San Diego mosque attack by teenage neo-Nazis

Jacob Crosse
19 May 2026

Three men were killed Monday in a fascist terrorist attack on the Islamic Center of San Diego, the largest mosque in San Diego County, after two teenage gunmen opened fire while roughly 140 children were inside the complex. A landscaper was also shot at by the neo-Nazis but did not suffer serious injuries.

The victims were identified by mosque leaders and press reports as Amin Abdullah, Mansour Kaziha and Nader Awad. Abdullah, a father of eight and a longtime and beloved security guard at the mosque, has been widely credited with saving many lives. According to police and witnesses, he confronted the gunmen, exchanged fire with them and initiated a lockdown protocol, giving children and staff inside the mosque's school enough time to hide.

The attack was preceded by a warning to police from the mother of Cain Clark, one of the suspects. San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl said the mother reported that Clark had left a suicide note, stolen her vehicle, taken weapons out of her apparently extensive cache, donned camouflage and was with another individual. Two hours after this initial report, police were dispatched to a mall when the shooting at the mosque was reported.

A video posted online appeared to show the suspects approaching the Islamic Center and opening fire, with one suspect wearing camouflage fatigues and a plate carrier. The two suspected gunmen, identified in multiple reports as Clark, 17, and Caleb Velasquez, 18, had patches associated with neo-Nazism and militant accelerationism, including a Sonnenrad flag and SS bolts on a red gas can.

Seeking to emulate Christchurch, New Zealand, mass murderer Brenton Tarrant, the pair attempted to stream their killings over GoPro cameras. Clark and Velasquez were later found dead in a vehicle near the mosque. A video circulating online of the pair's final moments inside the vehicle appears to show Clark shooting Velasquez before turning the gun on himself.

The attack took place one day after Trump and leading Republicans participated in a state-sponsored Christian nationalist festival in Washington D.C., which elevated evangelical and far-right Catholic forces while excluding any meaningful representation of Muslims, Hindus or other religious minorities. The next day, two teenage Nazis, whose manifesto was titled "The New Crusade," attacked the largest mosque in San Diego County.

Ignoring the fact that the pair were adorned with Nazi iconography, police and federal officials initially characterized the evidence in vague terms. The FBI said the suspects' writings expressed a "broad hatred" toward different religions and races, while officials referred to "generalized hate rhetoric" and anti-Islamic writings.

This description is a political whitewash. A manifesto posted online under the title "The New Crusade: Sons of Tarrant" makes clear that the attack was not the product of amorphous "hate," but of a definite fascist ideology: neo-Nazism, antisemitism, misogyny, white supremacy and the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory. Its language echoes, almost word for word, the anti-immigrant bile promoted for years by Trump, the Republican Party, Tucker Carlson, Elon Musk and other fascists.

The document repeatedly frames immigration as an "invasion" and "replacement" of white people, while explicitly glorifying fascist mass murderers, including Brenton Tarrant, 2022 Buffalo mass shooter Payton Gendron, Tree of Life synagogue mass murderer Robert Bowers and Adolf Hitler.

Particularly revealing is the manifesto's hatred of communism and internationalism. Its authors denounce socialism precisely because it seeks to unite workers across national, racial and religious divisions. Against this, they counterpose "national socialism," racial hierarchy and mass violence. The document thus exposes a basic function of fascism: to divide the working class

along racial and national lines and direct social anger away from capitalism and toward scapegoats.

The language of the manifesto is more crude and openly genocidal than that used by Republican politicians and media personalities, but its political substance is the same. The claim that immigrants are “invading” the country, taking jobs, destroying the economy, spreading crime, imposing foreign cultures and replacing the native-born population has been repeated endlessly from Trump’s rallies, Fox News broadcasts, right-wing podcasts and congressional hearings. The fascist gunmen drew the logical conclusion from this propaganda.

Ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, Republican politicians in Texas and Florida have built campaigns around denunciations of “Sharia law,” “Islamification” and “radical Islam.”

In Texas, Governor Greg Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton have targeted a Muslim-led planned community associated with the East Plano Islamic Center, while Republican candidates have made what they call the fight against the “Islamification of Texas” a central campaign theme. PBS reported earlier this month that Texas Republican campaigns have placed Muslims and “Islamification” at the center of their primary appeals. Senators John Cornyn (Texas) and Tommy Tuberville (Alabama) have also introduced the “Defeat Sharia Law in America Act,” explicitly aimed at whipping up anti-Muslim hysteria.

The same campaign is underway in Florida. Last month, Governor Ron DeSantis signed a sweeping “anti-terrorism” measure aimed at pro-Palestinian, left-wing and antiwar opposition, while Republican Representative Randy Fine has repeatedly issued genocidal and anti-Muslim statements, including calls for Gaza to be “nuked” and remarks for which he has openly embraced the charge of Islamophobia.

The attack occurred amid the Trump administration’s escalating illegal war against Iran, a war accompanied by explicitly anti-Muslim and Christian nationalist rhetoric from the highest levels of the American state.

On the same day as the mosque shooting, Trump said he had put off a “very major attack” on Iran, after previously warning on Truth Social that Iran had to move “FAST” or “there won’t be anything left of them.”

This followed weeks of threats in which Trump spoke of wiping out whole populations in language indistinguishable from fascist war propaganda. His threats against Iran, including references to destroying Iranian civilization in “one glow,” are part of the same political

climate in which Muslims, immigrants and opponents of imperialist war are portrayed as enemies to be crushed.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has given this war drive an explicitly Christian nationalist coloring. In an April article, *The Atlantic* noted that during the first Christian worship service at the Pentagon since the Iran war began, Hegseth presented the conflict as “essentially religious and spiritual in nature,” with remarks focused on “mercilessly inflicting vengeance and pain” on the enemy. Hegseth read a prayer asking God for “overwhelming violence of action against those who deserve no mercy,” praying that “every round find its mark against the enemies of righteousness,” and that God “break the teeth of the ungodly.” He concluded by invoking “the mighty and powerful name of Jesus Christ.”

This is the broader context in which two teenage Nazis attacked a mosque under the banner of “The New Crusade”: war abroad, mass deportations at home, Christian nationalist mobilizations and the demonization of immigrants and Muslims as an “invasion.”

The San Diego mosque attack is another warning that the fascist movement being built around Trump is not merely electoral or rhetorical. It is producing armed cells, teenage recruits and would-be death squads, animated by the same anti-immigrant, antisemitic and anti-Muslim conspiracies promoted by the Republican Party and tolerated, downplayed or covered up by the police and media.



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