News



A Crime Scene Unit member operates at the area where a shooting took place at Clara Muhammad Square in West Philadelphia April 10, 2024. Three people were struck by gunfire as some 1,000 were on hand at a park in West Philadelphia to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, which concludes the Islamic month of fasting known as Ramadan. (OSV News/Matthew Hatcher, Reuters)

Gina Christian

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Philadelphia — April 11, 2024
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Philadelphia's archbishop has called for prayer following a mass shooting at an outdoor gathering in that city marking an Islamic holiday.

Three people were struck by gunfire April 10 as some 1,000 were on hand at a park in West Philadelphia to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, which concludes the Islamic month of fasting known as Ramadan. The shots sent attendees — which included a number of families with young children — running in all directions, with one girl struck by a police car as she fled.

According to Philadelphia Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel, the child's leg was fractured. There were no fatalities.

One of those shot was a 15-year-old armed male whom Bethel said had been wounded in the shoulder and leg after being engaged by police. The teen — now under arrest along with four adults, including one female — has been taken to the hospital. Five guns have been recovered.

A 22-year-old male sustained a gunshot wound to his stomach; a third victim, a juvenile, suffered injuries to his hands.

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The shooting remains under investigation, with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Philadelphia field office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms assisting the Philadelphia Police Department.

Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of Philadelphia issued a statement immediately after the shooting, saying he was "deeply saddened to learn of the gun violence that erupted."

"On behalf of the bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated religious, and lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, I extend heartfelt prayers and expressions of

solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Muslim faith community," he said. "We share a common call with them to be bearers of hope, peace and joy in all things. Today, we share in their pain."



Philadelphia Archbishop Nelson J. Perez is seen at the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul May 23, 2021. (OSV News/Sarah Webb, CatholicPhilly.com)

The archbishop — who is co-convener of the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia, which represents more than 2 million people of various faith traditions

— asked "all people of the Church of Philadelphia" to join him "in asking God to strengthen and console all those who are suffering.

"May the Almighty pour His mercy upon them and hold them in His loving embrace," said Archbishop Pérez.

He also urged prayers "for the swift recovery of all those who were injured this afternoon," adding, "We owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to all of the first responders who are currently on the scene and who put their lives on the line to protect and serve our communities each day. May God watch over and protect them."