News



A woman cries as she pays her respects at Bondi Pavilion Dec. 15, 2025, to victims of a shooting during a Jewish holiday celebration at the beach in Sydney. Two gunmen opened fire during a Hanukkah celebration on Sydney's Bondi beach Dec. 14, killing 15 people, including a child, officials said. (OSV News/Reuters/Hollie Adams)

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After two gunmen targeted Jewish beachgoers at an event celebrating the first day of Hanukkah in a terror attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach, Pope Leo XIV said he is "deeply saddened" by the attack he called "horrific."

In a Dec. 15 telegram signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the pope said he is praying for those recovering and those grieving "the loss of a loved one," hoping that "those tempted to violence will undergo conversion and seek the path of peace and solidarity."

"Enough with these forms of antisemitic violence!" Leo said earlier on Dec. 15, speaking with the groups that donated this year's Vatican Christmas tree and Nativity scene. "We must eliminate hatred from our hearts," he said.

In an overnight statement sent to OSV News Dec. 14, Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher said, "As we follow the horrific news coming from this evening's shooting at Bondi Beach, let us pray for those who have been killed or injured, the many who were forced to run for their lives and our emergency service workers who are right now trying to keep people safe."

Fisher asked that "Our Lady, Queen of Peace, intercede for all affected, and for our beloved city at this time."

In a Dec. 15 statement, Fisher called for an end to an "atmosphere of antisemitism" in Australia.

"Any attack on individual Jews is an attack on the whole Jewish community and an affront to the Australian way of life," Fisher said as he called for an unequivocal condemnation of the attack and swift justice for the victims.

He also shared that he personally has Jewish heritage from his great-grandmother, and that, as Christians, "an attack on the Jews is an attack on all of us."

"We all share in profound grief and righteous anger following last night's terrorist attack on Bondi Beach," the archbishop said.

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"That a celebration of the Jewish feast of Hanukkah could end in at least 16 dead, including a young child, and many more injured, horrifies ordinary Australians.

"The brazen and callous disregard for human life, and the hatred of some people toward all Jews, is an unspeakable evil that must be repudiated by every Australian."

U.S. bishops also reacted to the attack.

The Catholic community of the New York Archdiocese "prayed this morning at St. Patrick's Cathedral for our Jewish neighbors and friends, who are suffering again after that terrible diabolical atrocity in Australia," Cardinal Timothy Dolan said Dec. 14.

"It gives us cause to intensify our advocacy for the defense of our Jewish friends and neighbors, and also brings to mind the message of Hanukkah and Christmas that light will always conquer darkness," the cardinal stressed.

Bishop Michael Barber of Oakland, California, called the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach a "horrific tragedy."

"We condemn such violence, especially violence in the name of anti-Semitism. In solidarity with our Jewish brothers and sisters we pray for God's mercy and that He may change hearts and minds toward love of neighbor," Barber said.

In New Mexico, Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe said, "The atrocious attack on those beginning to celebrate Hanukkah at Bondi Beach is incomprehensible, shocking, and evil."

"Our hearts go out to our Jewish communities here in New Mexico and beyond," he said. "May the lighting of the menorah during these eight days dispel the darkness of hatred and violence that has enveloped our world."

At a press conference in Sydney Dec. 14, just hours after the shooting, New South Wales Premier Chris Minns told journalists that 12 people were dead, including one of the gunmen, but later the death toll rose to 15, and The Guardian reported a 10-

year-old girl, a rabbi and two Holocaust survivors were among victims.



Emergency vehicles are at the scene of the mass shooting at Bondi Beach in Sydney Dec. 14, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Izhar Khan)

The second gunman, police confirmed, was in custody and in critical condition.

According to authorities, more than 40 people were wounded and taken to St. Vincent's Hospital.

"What should have been a night of peace and joy, celebrated in that community with families and supporters, has been shattered by this horrifying evil attack," Minns said.

"Our heart bleeds for Australia's Jewish community tonight. I can only imagine the pain that they're feeling right now to see their loved ones killed as they celebrate this ancient holiday," he added.

The attack occurred in the early evening as hundreds were gathered for a Hanukkah celebration at Archer Park, a grassy area in Bondi Beach. A video circulating online showed a beachgoer tackling and disarming one of the gunmen while the other gunman fired from a nearby bridge.

At the press conference, Mal Lanyon, police commissioner for the state of New South Wales, said, "I cannot confirm there is a third offender, but I want to make sure there's no stone left unturned."

He also confirmed that police located a vehicle near Bondi Beach that contained several improvised explosives and that "we have our rescue bomb disposal unit there at the moment working on that."

In an address following the shooting, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the attack was "an act of evil antisemitism, terrorism, that has struck the heart of our nation" and that an "attack on Jewish Australians is an attack on every Australian."

"Every Australian tonight will be, like me, devastated by this attack on our way of life. There is no place for this hate, violence and terrorism in our nation," Albanese said.

"Let me be clear: We will eradicate it. Amidst this vile act of violence and hate will emerge a moment of national unity where Australians across the board will embrace their fellow Australians of Jewish faith," he added.



Rabbi Levi Wolff lights a menorah as people pay respects at Bondi Pavilion Dec. 15, 2025, to victims of a shooting during a Jewish holiday celebration at the beach in Sydney. (OSV News/Reuters/Hollie Adams)

Robert Gregory, the head of the Australian Jewish Association, criticized Albanese's government, saying the attack was "a tragedy but entirely foreseeable."

"The Albanese government was warned so many times, but failed to take adequate actions to protect the Jewish community," Gregory said in a statement published on the association's X account.

"Tonight, many Jews are pondering whether they have a future in Australia. Our thoughts are with our community and all the impacted, some of whom we are close to," he wrote.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog expressed his condolences to the victims and their families and called on the Australian government to act on rising violence against Jewish people in the country.

"We repeat our alerts, time and again, to the Australian government to seek action and fight against the enormous wave of anti-Semitism which is plaguing Australian society," Herzog said.

Fisher also condemned a rise in antisemitism over the past two years. "[It has] festered, leading to intimidation, division, and the normalization of incendiary language," he said.

"Opposite my own cathedral in Hyde Park there have been weekly demonstrations where inflammatory messages have been regularly articulated which could only have 'turned up the temperature' and perhaps contributed to radicalization. This must stop."

On behalf of Sydney's Catholic community, the archbishop extended condolences to all those affected and said the archdiocese would redouble its efforts to combat antisemitism through education and preaching.