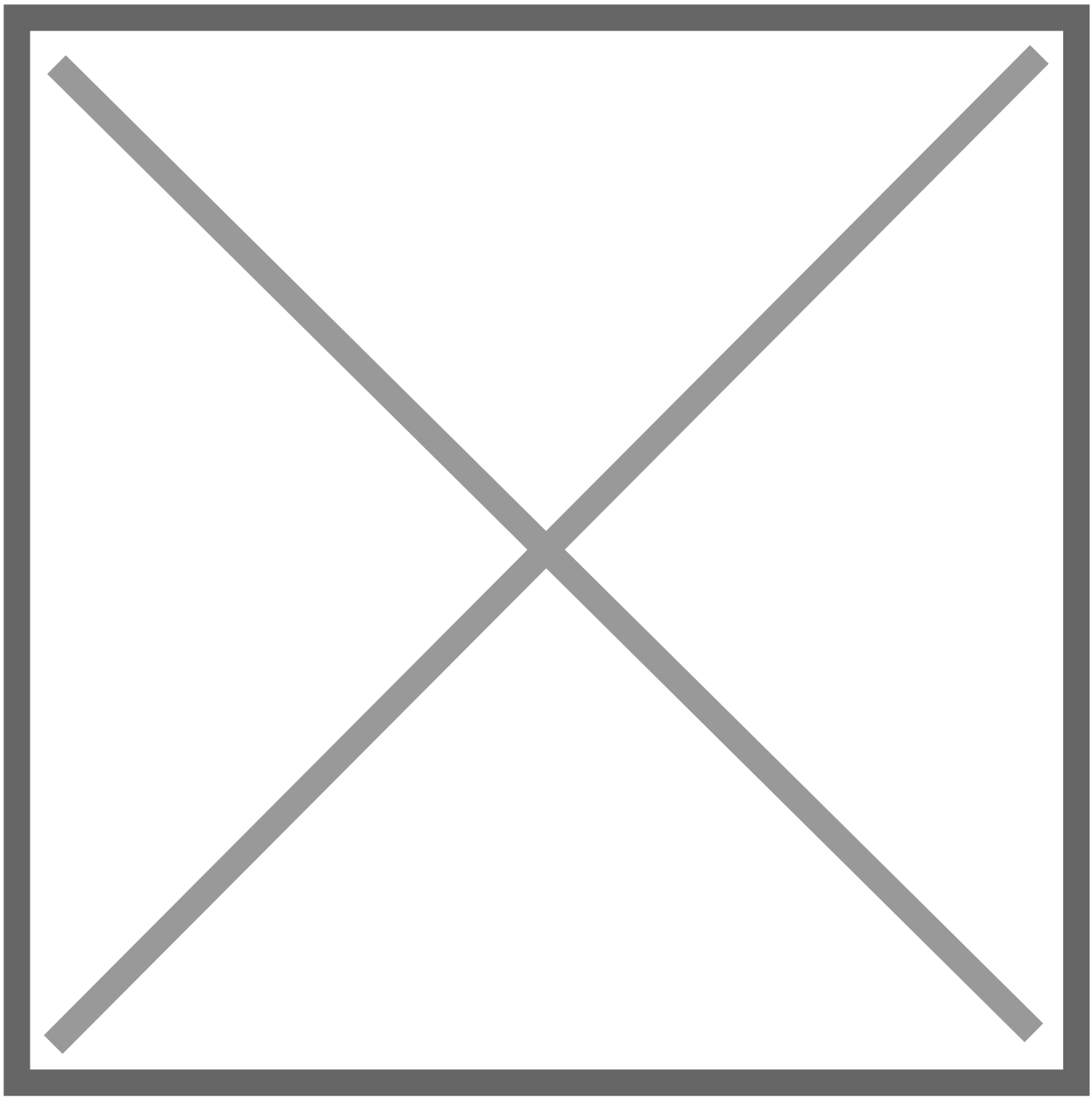
News



Emergency workers respond at the scene of a reported active shooter situation at the Islamic Center in San Diego, California, May 18, 2026. (OSV News/Reuters/Mike Blake)

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San Diego — May 19, 2026

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Catholic bishops are expressing their grief and support, following a deadly May 18 shooting at a mosque complex in San Diego that killed three adults, including a security guard.

The two teen suspects were later found dead of apparent self-inflicted gunshot wounds.

Within hours of the attack, Bishop Michael Pham of San Diego released a message saying the faithful there "stand united in solidarity and prayer with the Muslim community."

In a May 19 statement, Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said he and his fellow bishops "extend our profound sorrow" following the shooting.

Coakley said the bishops "stand with" the center's chief imam, Taha Hassane, as well as "the entire Muslim community, and all who mourn in the wake of this senseless violence, affirming our shared commitment to the dignity of every human life and the rejection of hatred in all its forms."

Law enforcement is investigating the shooting — during which a nearby landscaper was also reported to have been targeted, though without serious injury — as a hate crime.

No children from the mosque's school and no officers were injured, according to San Diego police.

The attack unfolded just before 12 p.m. May 18 at the Islamic Center of San Diego, located in that city's Clairemont neighborhood.

About two hours earlier, the mother of one teen suspect had alerted police she believed her son was suicidal and that "several of her weapons," along with her car, had been taken, according to the San Diego police chief.

She said her son had left with a companion, both dressed in camouflage, and also said she had found a note left behind, which police later said contained "general hate speech."

San Diego police said the suspects were ages 17 and 18, and that the names of victims and suspects were being withheld pending notifications.

Speaking at a press briefing, San Diego police chief Scott Wahl described the slain security guard's actions as "heroic," adding, "Undoubtedly, he saved lives today."

Hassane, director of the center, told media that it was "extremely outrageous to target a place of worship."

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He said, "The other mosques and all the places of worship in our beautiful city should always be protected."

In his statement, Pham said, "The Islamic Center has been a longtime partner in our collaborative work for justice, especially in accompanying immigrants."

He continued: "Houses of worship must always be sanctuaries of peace, safety, and prayer. An attack on one faith community is an attack on the sacred dignity of all human life."

Speaking "on behalf of the entire Roman Catholic community of San Diego," Pham offered "my deepest condolences, solidarity, and fervent prayers to the families of the victims and the entire Muslim community."

Coakley said that in "moments such as these, we are reminded of the call to be instruments of peace."

He quoted Pope Leo XIV, saying, "Where violence wounds the human family, compassion and unity must be our steadfast reply."

Coakley added, "May God console the grieving, strengthen the injured, and guide us all toward greater understanding, justice, and peace."