

Shooter kills 2 children in Minneapolis church, 17 people injured

AFP | Minneapolis, United States

A gunman opened fire yesterday on school children attending church in Minneapolis, killing two pupils and wounding 17 people, police said, in the country's latest violent tragedy.

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara told a media briefing that the shooter, in his early twenties, sprayed bullets into the Annunciation Church as dozens of students were at Mass to celebrate their first week back to school.

The church sits next to an affiliated school in the south of the city, the largest in the state of Minnesota.

"Two young children, ages eight and 10, were killed where they sat in the pews," O'Hara said, adding that 17 others were injured, including 14 children.

Two were in critical condition, he said.

The gunman fired a rifle, shotgun and pistol before he took his own life in the parking lot, according to the police chief.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz wrote on X earlier that he was "praying for our kids and teachers whose first week of school was marred by this horrific act of violence."

Live video footage showed panicked parents retrieving their young children and fleeing, amid a major emergency response.



Police and first responders work at the scene of a shooting near Annunciation Church and Catholic School in Minneapolis, Minnesota

A country of school shootings

"This was a deliberate act of violence against innocent children and other people worshipping. The sheer cruelty and cowardice of firing into a church full of children is absolutely incomprehensible," O'Hara said.

"Our hearts are broken for the families who have lost their children, for these young lives that are now fighting to recover, and for our entire community that has been so deeply traumatized by this senseless attack," he added.

Wednesday's violence is the

latest in a long line of school shootings in the United States, where guns outnumber people and attempts to restrict access to firearms face perennial political deadlock.

"Don't just say this is about thoughts and prayers right now. These kids were literally

praying. It was the first week of school. They were in a church. These are kids that should be learning with their friends," Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey told reporters.

"They should be playing on the playground. They should be able to go to school or church in

peace without the fear or risk of violence."

President Donald Trump said he had been briefed on the "tragic shooting" and that the FBI was responding.

"The White House will continue to monitor this terrible situation. Please join me in praying for everyone involved!" he wrote on his Truth Social platform.

The confirmed shooting comes after a wave of false reports of active shooters at US college campuses around the country as students return from summer break.



In 2024, there were over 44,000 firearm-related deaths, marking the first time in five years that the annual total fell below 45,000. This represents an almost 5% decrease from 2023, which had over 46,000 such fatalities, according to provisional data from the CDC.

Trump administration takes control of Washington rail hub

AFP | Washington, United States

The Trump administration said yesterday it will exert more control over Washington by taking over management of Union Station, the US capital's rail hub.

The announcement by Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy -- he said the station had become "dilapidated" -- came as the administration has already deployed thousands of federal agents and National Guard troops to the streets of Washington to battle what it calls a surge in violent crime.

President Donald Trump "wants Union Station to be beautiful again. He wants transit to be safe again. He wants our nation's capital to be great again," Duffy told a press conference at the stately building a stone's throw from the US Capitol.

Union Station, which opened in 1907, has been owned by the government since the 1980s but its operational control is held by the national railroad company Amtrak.

Now the Trump administration is taking over.

Since the 1980s "Washington Union Station has become dilapidated. It is known more as a



U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy (C) sits onboard a NextGen Amtrak Acela train for a trip to Boston following a news conference on the upgraded train's first day of service along the Northeast Corridor

center for vagrancy than a hub for commerce and travel," Duffy said in a statement.

"We are going to make the investments to make sure that this station isn't dirty, we don't have homelessness in the Union Station," Duffy said at the press conference, which was called to unveil a new generation of Amtrak high speed trains.

The administration plans improvements including to eleva-

tors, lighting and security, and will put on a new roof, Duffy said.

As he seeks to exert control on a broad range of American institutions, Trump has cracked down on the overwhelmingly Democratic city where he lives, depicting it as overrun by street shootings and other crime.

The show of force has been widely criticized as the latest power grab Trump has made or

attempted since returning to the White House in January.

The US capital has a unique legal status as it is not a state or part of one, and operates under a relationship with the federal government that limits its autonomy and grants Congress extraordinary control over local matters.

Trump used this loophole to send the National Guard into Washington this month.

French, German, Polish leaders vow 'support' to Moldova in face of Russia



From left: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, French President Emmanuel Macron, Moldova's President Maia Sandu and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz walk down the steps following a press conference

AFP | Chisinau, Moldova

The leaders of France, Germany and Poland all expressed their support for Moldova's EU bid on Wednesday, slamming Russian "lies" and "hybrid attacks" during a symbolic visit to the former Soviet republic bordering Ukraine.

The visit comes a day before campaigning starts for next month's tense parliamentary election amid claims of Russian interference in the pro-EU nation.

French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Moldova's President Maia Sandu to celebrate the country's 34th independence day

as she pushes for EU membership.

"The Kremlin's propaganda tells us that Europeans want to prolong the war and that the European Union oppresses people. These are lies. Unlike Russia, the European Union threatens no one and respects everyone's sovereignty," Macron told reporters alongside Merz, Tusk and Sandu, expressing France's "determined support" to Moldova and its EU bid.

Merz said the "door to the European Union is open", adding the country would be "wholeheartedly welcome in the European Union" and that Berlin would "do all we can to open the first chapter of negotiations in the autumn".