

Texas Synagogue siege: Two teenagers arrested in south Manchester over attack

From the [Manchester Evening News](#) and the [Telegraph](#) Photograph of Akram from [Sky News](#)

Updated Tuesday from the [Manchester Evening News](#)

Two teenagers have this evening been detained in south Manchester by officers from Counter Terror Policing North West in connection with an attack on a synagogue in Texas. It comes as it was confirmed that the hostage-taker, who was shot dead after a 10 hour stand-off at a synagogue in Texas, was from Blackburn in Lancashire. *Blackburn is about 30 miles (53 minutes by train) away; completely separate towns.* The pair remain in custody for questioning.

Earlier this evening, Assistant Chief Constable Dominic Scally, for Counter Terror Policing North West, said they are helping with the investigation being led by authorities in the US.

He said: "Firstly, our thoughts remain with everyone affected by the terrible events that took place in Texas on 15 January. We can confirm that the suspect, who is deceased, is 44 year old Malik Faisal Akram, originally from the Blackburn area of Lancashire. I can also confirm that Counter Terror Policing North West is assisting with the investigation being led by the US authorities.

CTP North West and CTP International operations have said they will "continue to assist the investigation being led by the US authorities, and police forces in the region are liaising with local communities to put in place any measures to provide further reassurance."

“Police forces in the region will continue to liaise with their local communities, including the Jewish community, and will put in place any necessary measures to provide reassurance to them.”

Manchester is the home of a large Jewish community.

✘ The FBI are due to fly to the UK today to interview the family. Reports suggest the terrorist was well known to British police and it is unclear when he flew to the US and how he obtained a visa. *Because how else did they know where to find his brother quickly enough to get him to the incident room at Greenbank police station in Blackburn to liaising with Faisal, the negotiators, FBI etc.*

In a statement, Akram’s family in Blackburn said they had also assisted the FBI by maintaining contact with their relative over the phone from a police incident room in the UK.

“We would like to say that we as a family do not condone any of his actions and would like to sincerely apologise wholeheartedly to all the victims involved in the unfortunate incident,” the family said.

Gulbar Akram’s statement also criticised reports suggesting his brother’s three hostages had been rescued, insisting his brother had “released” them. . . . described as “bull--” reports that the hostages had been rescued by an FBI elite team but had instead been released through a fire exit door.

He added: “A few minutes later a firefight has taken place and he was shot and killed. There was nothing we could have said to him or done that would have convinced him to surrender.”

FBI special agent in charge Matt DeSarno said they have been in contact with their legal attache offices in London and Israel. He told reporters: “Our investigation will have global reach. We have been in contact already with multiple FBI legats to include Tel Aviv and London.”

Mr DeSarno said investigators believe Akram was “singularly focused on one issue and it was not specifically related to the Jewish community”. *Investigators have to keep an open mind but I think most informed people fear there will prove to be a connection.*

Update from Tuesday's [Manchester Evening News](#)

Two teenagers detained by police over the Texas Synagogue attack have tonight been released without charge. . . .

Officers from Counter Terrorism Policing North West have said they have “been in constant contact with US authorities to support them with their investigation and continue to lead a local investigation.”

However the two teenagers, who were both detained in South Manchester, have since been released without charge, GMP has announced. An address in North Manchester has been searched as part of the CTP North West investigation.

Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Dominic Scally, of Counter Terrorism Policing North West, said: “CTP North West is continuing to assist with the investigation which is being led by US authorities. Overnight, constructive meetings with colleagues from the United States have taken place. “As part of our enquiries, we’re also working with colleagues in other forces and Lancashire Police are working with communities in the Blackburn area to put measures in place to provide reassurance.”

Some US and Australian newspapers said this morning that they two teenagers are sons of Malik Faisal Akram, which isn't unlikely, but I have no positive confirmation.