

Campus violence

World Leaders Express Condolences for Victims of US University Massacre

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Leaders from countries throughout the world are offering their condolences to victims of the brutal massacre at a U.S. university that left 33 people dead, including the gunman. VOA correspondent Meredith Buel has details from Washington.

Officials from South Korea were among the first to react to Monday's massacre at Virginia Tech after learning the suspected gunman was a South Korean national.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Cho Byung-je spoke in Seoul. "We here in Korea also were very much shocked at the horrific incident, and we Korean people and the Korean government would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the victims and the bereaved families of the American people," he said.

Police identified the gunman as 23-year-old Cho Seung-hui, a legal resident alien who moved to the United States as a boy.

Cho, an English major in his final year of college, fired guns into groups of students and faculty members before killing himself in the deadliest shooting rampage in U.S. history.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, a former South Korean foreign minister, spoke with reporters in New York. "I feel very much sorry and troubled and any such rampant killing of innocent citizens and children is totally not acceptable and I condemn it in the strongest terms possible," he said.

In London, Britain's Queen Elizabeth said she was saddened by the shootings. The queen is scheduled to visit Virginia next month to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the United States. British Prime Minister Tony Blair also offered his condolences. "I would like to express, on behalf of Britain and the British people, our profound sadness at what has

happened and to send the American people, and most especially the families of the victims, our sympathy and our prayers," he said.

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, a former student and teacher at Virginia Tech, expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the victims.

The victims of the massacre at Virginia Tech came from throughout the United States and many countries around the world.

One of those killed was Liviu Librescu, an engineering and math professor at the university. Librescu's students sent e-mails to his wife telling her how he saved their lives by blocking the doorway of a classroom to keep the gunman out.

Librescu, who was born in Romania and was a Holocaust survivor, was shot and killed, but his students survived.

Professor Nicolae Tomescu, a lecturer at Bucharest Polytechnic Institute and a friend of the victim, said Librescu always had strong feelings for his students. "Librescu always showed himself to be a man of great and strong character, very dignified, and that is the way he died. He has huge affection for his students and he sacrificed his life for them," he said.

At the Polytechnic Institute, where Librescu received an honorary degree in 2000, his picture was placed on a table, a candle was lit, and people left flowers nearby.