

Shooting at Festival in California Kills at Least 3

By Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs and Jacey Fortin

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Read Monday's live updates on the shooting.

At least three people were killed and 12 more were injured in a shooting at a garlic festival in Gilroy, Calif., on Sunday, the authorities said.

A suspect carrying an assault-style rifle was fatally shot by the Gilroy police, the city administrator, Gabriel Gonzalez, said in a statement. Late Sunday evening, the police were continuing to search for a possible accomplice in Gilroy, which is about 30 miles southeast of San Jose.

“We believe based on witness statements that there was a second individual involved in some way, we just don’t know in what way,” Chief Scot Smithee of the Police Department said at a news conference.

A six-year-old boy who had been playing at an inflatable bounce house was among those killed, his father told local news outlets.



People waited for relatives at a reunification center at Gavilan College after the shooting.
Josie Lepe/Associated Press

The boy, Stephen Romero, was shot in the back, said his father, Alberto. He added that his wife had been shot in the stomach, and his mother-in-law in the leg.

“My son had his whole life to live and he was only 6,” Mr. Romero told NBC Bay Area.

The shooting happened around 5:40 p.m. local time and the police responded within one minute, Chief Smithee said. To reach the festival, the suspect appeared to have crossed a bordering creek and cut a perimeter fence, he said.

“It’s sort of a nightmare you hope you never have to live in reality,” the chief said.

The shooting took place during the Gilroy Garlic Festival, an annual three-day event held at Christmas Hill Park. Gilroy, a city of about 60,000 people, is a major producer of garlic and is home to agricultural workers and people who commute to technology jobs.

The festival’s executive director, Brian Bowe, said at a news conference that for several decades the event had acted as a kind of family reunion, and that the shooting was “a sad, horribly upsetting circumstance.”

Marie Blankley, the mayor pro tempore, called it “heartbreaking and tragic” and Gov. Gavin Newsom said on Twitter that it was “nothing short of horrific.”

30 mi.
50 km.

San Francisco

CALIFORNIA



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By The New York Times

Videos posted on social media showed attendees running past white tents in a grassy field, apparently fleeing. People looking to reunite with friends and family members had been told to gather at Gavilan College, a community

college on the outskirts of the city.

The authorities initially reported that 15 people had been wounded, but clarified early Monday that it was in fact 12.

One of those injured was Lesley Sanchez, 15, a Gilroy High School cheerleader who was volunteering at the festival, according to family members. She was shot in the hip but was well enough to receive visitors in her hospital room on Sunday night, they said.

Olivia Chiu, 24, a festival attendee from San Francisco, said she and her boyfriend heard gunshots that seemed to come from a central area near food and merchandise vendors.

“Everyone was in a state of panic and trying to escape out of the festival to a safer area,” she said.



A video still taken from a Twitter account shows people running at the festival. “Everyone was in a state of panic and trying to escape,” one attendee said. @wavyia, via Reuters

She said she and several others ran out of the park and into a neighborhood, where they knocked on doors in search of shelter.

Jonathan Williams, 29, who was raised in Gilroy, was sitting on a hay bale when he heard what he thought were fireworks. When the sound did not stop, he realized they were gunshots — at least 20.

He saw lots of people, including children with their parents, running frantically and hiding under anything they could find. “There were people jumping in closed booth tents, hiding under tables,” he said.

Peter Leroe-Munoz, a city councilman, said he had volunteered at a booth at the garlic festival and was horrified to learn that the shooting had taken place at the city’s prime event.

“That is our crown jewel in terms of our cultural identity,” he said. “For this kind of tragedy to take place at something so core to our community, it is a tragedy beyond words.”

Correction: July 29, 2019

Because of an editing error, an earlier version of this article misspelled the given name of the Gilroy police chief. He is Scot, not Scott.

Jason M. Bailey and Nicole Perlroth contributed reporting.

A version of this article appears in print on July 28, 2019, Section A, Page 13 of the New York edition with the headline: At Least 3 Are Killed in Shooting At Garlic Festival in California

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