

= Kauhajoki school shooting =

The Kauhajoki school shooting occurred on 23 September 2008 , at the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences in Western Finland . The gunman , 22 @-@ year @-@ old student Matti Juhani Saari , shot and fatally injured ten people with a Walther P22 semi @-@ automatic pistol , before shooting himself in the head . He died a few hours later in Tampere University Hospital . One woman was injured but was in a stable condition .

The shooting took place at the Kauhajoki School of Hospitality , owned by the Seinäjoki Municipal Federation of Education . The facilities and campus were shared between the Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and the Seinäjoki Vocational Education Centre ? Sedu . Saari was a second @-@ year student in a Bachelor of Hospitality Management degree programme .

The incident was the second school shooting in less than a year in Finland , the other being the Jokela school shooting in November 2007 , in which nine people including the gunman died . Before that , only one other school shooting had taken place in the country 's history , in Rauma in 1989 , leaving two people dead .

= = Shooting = =

Saari entered through the school buildings via the basement . The shooting began at around 10 : 40 ( UTC + 3 ) , when roughly 200 people were assembled inside the college . The emergency services received their first call at 10 : 46 . Saari was armed with a .22 LR calibre Walther P22 Target semi @-@ automatic firearm and homemade Molotov cocktails . He wore dark clothing and a balaclava ( ski mask ) . The school 's caretaker Jukka Forsberg , who had several shots directed at him but survived , said " [ The gunman ] was very well prepared . He walked calmly . "

Saari initially opened fire on a group of students taking a business studies exam , and entered at least one other classroom . According to the three students who were able to escape the exam room ( there were roughly 20 students taking the exam ) , Saari had approached his victims individually before shooting them . It was also said that he was revelling in the situation and was acting very aggressively . Saari encountered little resistance , and the massacre was concluded relatively quickly . He then covered the classroom in a flammable liquid , believed to be petrol , and set the room alight .

A student in an adjacent classroom , Sanna Orpana , said that her class had heard " shooting and a kind of a rumble like tables falling down . " Orpana believed at the time that the noise may have been coming from a toy gun , and two other students went to investigate the noise . Saari shot at them , and the remaining students in Orpana 's classroom hid under a table before running upstairs . At some point between 10 : 45 ? 11 : 00 Saari ran down a corridor and threw a petrol bomb into a language laboratory . He then shot out all of the windows in the school 's main corridor , that extended through the building . It was during this time that he also took aim at Forsberg .

A police van with two officers arrived a short time after the shootings began , at around 11 : 00 . They entered the yard of the college where they were shot at by Saari , and forced to retreat . From around 11 : 45 to 12 : 00 further police units , bolstered by a number of armoured vehicles , began to arrive on the scene . They attempted to enter the building through the main corridor , but this assault was aborted due to the black smoke that was emanating from within the building .

= = Aftermath = =

Having escaped the buildings in a variety of ways ( including through doors and out of windows ) , some students found themselves impeded by a river that adjoined the school . However , some were able to use rowing boats as a means of escape . Saari started fires at several other locations within the school buildings , and the fire in the exam room damaged some of the bodies so badly that they had to be identified from DNA and dental records . Nine of the victims were found in the exam room , and one in a nearby corridor . It was later ascertained that this student had fled the burning classroom and then died in the corridor . Eight of the victims were female students , one a

male student , and one a male member of staff . All of the students killed were in their 20s , and the teacher was in his 50s . A 21 @-@ year @-@ old woman was shot in the head but had two operations in the days after sustaining her injury , and was reported as being in a satisfactory condition . A further ten students were treated for minor injuries including sprains and cuts from broken glass . All the victims were classmates of Saari 's . Saari was originally from Pohjois @-@ Pohjanmaa , but lived in Kauhajoki where he was enrolled on his catering course at the college . It was later revealed that the male student was probably a close friend of Saari 's . The pair had spent an evening out together in February 2008 when they were threatened with a starter pistol . A photo of them together had been circulating on the Internet , in which Saari jokingly points at his friend 's head with his forefinger . The names of the other victims were withheld by police .

Firefighters extinguished the fires without any major damage to the school . Saari remained at large for some time in the school grounds after they had been evacuated . Two days after the killings , a friend of Saari 's , named Rauno , told 7 päivää that at 11 : 53 he received a call from Saari in which he confessed to having killed ten people . Saari is claimed to have spoken to Rauno in a calm manner , telling him that he wanted to say goodbye . He was found alive by the police at 12 : 30 , having shot himself in the head . He was taken to Tampere University Hospital , where he was treated for his gunshot wound . He died a short time later at 17 : 40 .

With a total of ten people killed , it was the deadliest peacetime attack in Finnish history , surpassing the previous highest count of eight in the Jokela school shooting . It was the deadliest attack on a school campus since April 2007 , when Seung @-@ Hui Cho killed 32 people during the Virginia Tech shooting . Saari had fired a total of nearly 200 shots , including shots into the air . The highest number of shots inflicted to a single victim was twenty .

= = Perpetrator = =

Matti Juhani Saari ( 20 May 1986 ? 23 September 2008 ) was identified as the gunman responsible for the shooting . Saari , a hospitality management student at the school , was thrown out of the Finnish Army in 2006 , after being a member for only a month for opening fire in a woodland exercise , against orders . Saari had been the victim of bullying in secondary school and dropped out of his classes for this reason . A friend of Saari also reported that he had been seeing a psychologist in the months before the shooting , and had been obsessed with guns .

Saari left behind two handwritten notes in his school dormitory indicating that he had been planning the massacre for six years . A police spokesperson commented : " Saari left notes saying he had a hatred for mankind , for the whole of the human race , and that he had been thinking about what he was going to do for years . The notes show he was very troubled and he hated everything . " Police said that although most of the victims were female , the motive did not seem to be a hatred of women . One of Saari 's friends noticed a change in his behaviour two years before the shootings , when Saari began expressing a fondness for guns and an admiration of the school shootings in the United States . He said that around 18 months previously Saari had sent him a message saying that he would carry out a school shooting the next day . Saari reportedly denied being serious about carrying out his threat .

Police were also investigating whether a copycat element was involved after it emerged that both Saari and Pekka @-@ Eric Auvinen , the gunman in the Jokela school shooting , had bought their guns from the same store . Both gunmen had taken photographs of themselves in similar poses , and both exchanged videos related to school shootings on YouTube and Finnish social networking site IRC @-@ Galleria . In March 2009 , Police ruled out contact with Pekka @-@ Eric Auvinen , and said that he had committed his crimes alone : 200 people were interviewed during the investigation , none of whom said they knew of Saari 's plans .

Saari had a YouTube account where he uploaded videos of him firing a handgun at a local shooting range . Among the user 's YouTube account favourites was footage of the Columbine High School massacre . Finnish police had been informed about the YouTube videos in an anonymous tip @-@ off on the Friday before the shooting . The police talked to Saari and searched his home on the day before the incident , Monday 22 September . They found no reason to arrest him as he held a

temporary weapons permit . In August 2008 , Saari had obtained a licence for a .22 @-@ calibre ( 5 @.@ 6 mm ) pistol . The police said that Saari did not have a criminal record . However , a police inspector was subsequently charged with dereliction of duty , and his court case began in September 2009 .

Saari also posted another video on a Finnish social networking site , in which he pointed a gun at the camera and said in English " You will die next " , followed by firing four shots in the direction of the camera . This video was not available to the police when Saari was questioned . A police spokesperson commented : " The only video we saw was where he was shooting at the range . It was only afterwards that much more information came out . " Police said that Saari would have been detained if they had known about this video at the time of the questioning . Police said that they believed Saari 's videos were shot by someone else , and that they were trying to identify who this person was . The Chief Investigator of the case , Jari Neulaniemi , speculated that the cameraman may have been the friend of Saari 's who was murdered .

Interior Minister Anne Holmlund announced that the actions of the police would be investigated . Police Commissioner Mikko Paatero said that Finnish police would increase their monitoring of YouTube and other social networking sites , and when asked whether similar attacks could take place in the future , he replied : " I badly fear it 's possible . "

= = Response = =

On the day of the incident , a crisis meeting was held , with government ministers , chairs of the parliamentary groups , and police officials all in attendance . The Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen described it as a " tragic day " and appealed for unity in the hope " that events like these will not happen again . " A national day of mourning was declared for the following day , and Vanhanen travelled to Kauhajoki to meet with students .

Within days of the shooting , the police said they had received a sizeable number of tip @-@ offs alerting them to suspicious photographs , videos , and comments on chat rooms . Finnish media reported that several bomb threats and other threatening messages were circulating among students nationwide in the few days after the shootings as well .