

## **Victims, attacker in stabbings identified - Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) - May 3, 2018 - page 5B**

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Columbus police on Wednesday identified the four victims of Monday's apparent domestic-violence stabbing attack on the Northeast Side and the suspect, who was fatally shot by a police officer.

**Abadi Gebregziber**, 64, stabbed three women in a Northeast Side apartment before a police sergeant shot him in a confrontation in a parking lot outside the apartment on the 4400 block of Walford Street, police said. Gebregziber was holding a butcher knife when he was shot just after another officer had fired a stun gun at him, said Sgt. Dean Worthington, police division spokesman.

Gebregziber and two of the stabbing victims -- his estranged wife, 33-year-old Azeb Demewez, and Russom Habte, 19 -- were taken to OhioHealth Riverside Hospital, where they died Monday.

The third victim stabbed in the apartment, Alganesh Gebrezgabiher, 51, remains in Riverside in stable condition.

Angie Plummer, the executive director of Community Refugee & Immigration Services in Columbus, provided the relationships of the victims and their attacker. She said Gebrezgabiher is the mother of Russom Habte and 18-year-old Selam Habte.

Investigators discovered Selam Habte dead from stab wounds when they went to Gebregziber's townhouse address in the 2100 block of Fitzroy Drive in the same complex. Although Selam Habte was the fourth victim found, police believe that Gebregziber attacked him first on Monday, then went to the Walford Street apartment and stabbed the three women, Worthington said.

Police were called to the Walford Street apartment at 9:11 a.m. Monday and confronted Gebregziber. Sgt. Gregg Seevers, a 21-year veteran of the force, shot him.

The motive behind the stabbings remains unclear, police said, although it is believed to be domestic-related.

CRIS and Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services are raising money for a victims-of-crime compensation fund to aid the families, including the three young children of Demewez and Gebregziber who lived in the first-floor apartment on Walford Street and are now orphans. The oldest is a 7-year-old daughter who was at school at the time of the stabbings. The estranged couple also had twins; their ages and genders were still unavailable Wednesday.

CRIS had resettled the victims in the United States, helping them adjust to their new surroundings through job-placement and mentoring programs, Plummer said. They fled persecution in their home country of Eritrea in eastern Africa and lived for several years in a refugee camp in Ethiopia

before they came to the United States in June, she said.

"It is devastating to know that they fled Eritrea," only to become victims of domestic violence in the United States, Plummer said. "They came here in the hope of starting a new life."

Plummer said she hopes that people don't assume from this incident that refugees are prone to violence. "Domestic violence is a scourge" that affects people of all cultures and nationalities, she said.

Seevers is on a three-day administrative leave per department policy covering officer-involved shootings. An internal police firearms review board and a Franklin County grand jury also will review the shooting.

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