

NBC News Special

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3 minutes and 18 seconds

TOM WINTER: And obviously law enforcement is very concerned. Look, you heard them talking about it there. They're getting information that's being passed to them through official channels from federal law enforcement in this country. Everybody is acutely aware of what's going on in the world, the ongoing war with Iran, Iran's proxies, and what's happening in the Middle East. And you see the threats that have been — been passed along, some unverified, some not here in this country. And so, everybody is concerned when it comes to these sensitive religious sites, including this temple, according to the sheriff.

ZINHLE ESSAMUAH: Yeah, absolutely. And we know, as you say, Tom, it is a rapidly evolving situation. To the point of the landscape, I do want to bring in our national affairs and justice correspondent, Kelly O'Donnell. Kelly, we know this is a synagogue, a house of worship. As Tom said, we believe there's also a school, and it's happening in the context of the war with Iran. Walk us through the considerations here as we're figuring out what happened, who did it and why.

KELLY O'DONNELL: As we've all been watching this, you can see in the pictures coming from the scene, the enormous law enforcement presence there. That is an indication — a measure of how sensitive these matters are. Of course, in other communities around the country, we've already seen an elevation of security around, especially religious sites and especially those in the Jewish community. This particular location is home to a community of 3,000 Jewish families. As you pointed out, there is a school, there is childcare on the site, and it is a hub of the community, as it's been described by those who live there. And so, because of the wider context of the war with Iran, and also, of course, remember, Detroit is always sensitive to these issues because not only is there a prominent Jewish community, but it's one of the largest communities inside the United States of Arab-American communities of various nationalities. And so, there is a coexistence that exists in Michigan that is particularly attuned to these issues. And so, what we have seen is the FBI director has already put out that his resources are going to support those here in Michigan. The — of course, there is a field office in Detroit, and any additional things they need are in place. In addition, we've seen how Governor Gretchen Whitmer has called this heartbreaking. It is a measure of the sensitivity of the moment. As we are still learning details here. We know that historically, there have been a number of deadly attacks associated with Jewish communities, synagogues, related museums and so forth here in the Washington, D.C. area. And so because of that, there is a heightened sense of not only ongoing daily security. And in this instance, we understand that it was the security on the property that engaged that person who was driving a truck toward them. That was the first line of defense. Those kinds of defenses are being hardened in many communities around the country as a standard precaution. That is a posture they take regularly, and then they heighten it in the climate that we're in right now, with the U.S. engaged in Iran, with heated rhetoric, with threats, and as simply to be cautious. And so as this unfolds, we'll learn more details. But they're clearly federal resources here, community-based resources and a lot of worry in that neighborhood.