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Melbourne Man Charged Over Synagogue Arson in Terror Probe

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– Categories: Crime



Victoria Police have arrested a 21-year-old man in connection with the deliberate firebombing of a Melbourne synagogue late last year, which authorities are now treating as a suspected act of terrorism.

Giovanni Laulu, from Melbourne, was taken into custody on Wednesday and charged with several offences including arson, reckless conduct endangering life, and car theft. The charges stem from a December 2024 attack on the Adass Israel Synagogue in Melbourne, which left the building extensively damaged and one individual injured.

Police say Laulu will next appear in court on August 6.

Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Wendy Steendam assured the public that investigations remain ongoing and that further arrests may follow.

“We remain relentless in our pursuit of all those responsible for this crime and are committed to bringing them to justice,” said Steendam during a press conference.

The synagogue fire was one of several disturbing incidents targeting the Jewish community in Australia over the past year. Authorities have indicated that the Melbourne attack may have been orchestrated from overseas, though no further details have been released.

Two weeks prior to Laulu’s arrest, another 20-year-old man was charged with stealing the vehicle used in the synagogue arson. However, police have clarified that the second man is not currently accused of participating in the firebombing itself.

Earlier this month, a separate arson incident took place at another Melbourne synagogue during a Shabbat dinner, attended by over 20 people. Fortunately, there were no reported injuries, and one suspect has since been arrested. In a related event, more than 20 individuals stormed a Melbourne branch of a restaurant owned by an Israeli chef. Investigations into both incidents are ongoing.

Authorities have also linked a series of antisemitic attacks in Sydney last year to an organised criminal gang, reinforcing concerns over coordinated efforts to target Jewish institutions.

The broader investigation now involves counterterrorism units, with officials confirming that intelligence suggests foreign involvement. However, no international suspects have been named publicly.

Law enforcement continues to urge the public to come forward with any information that could assist the investigation.