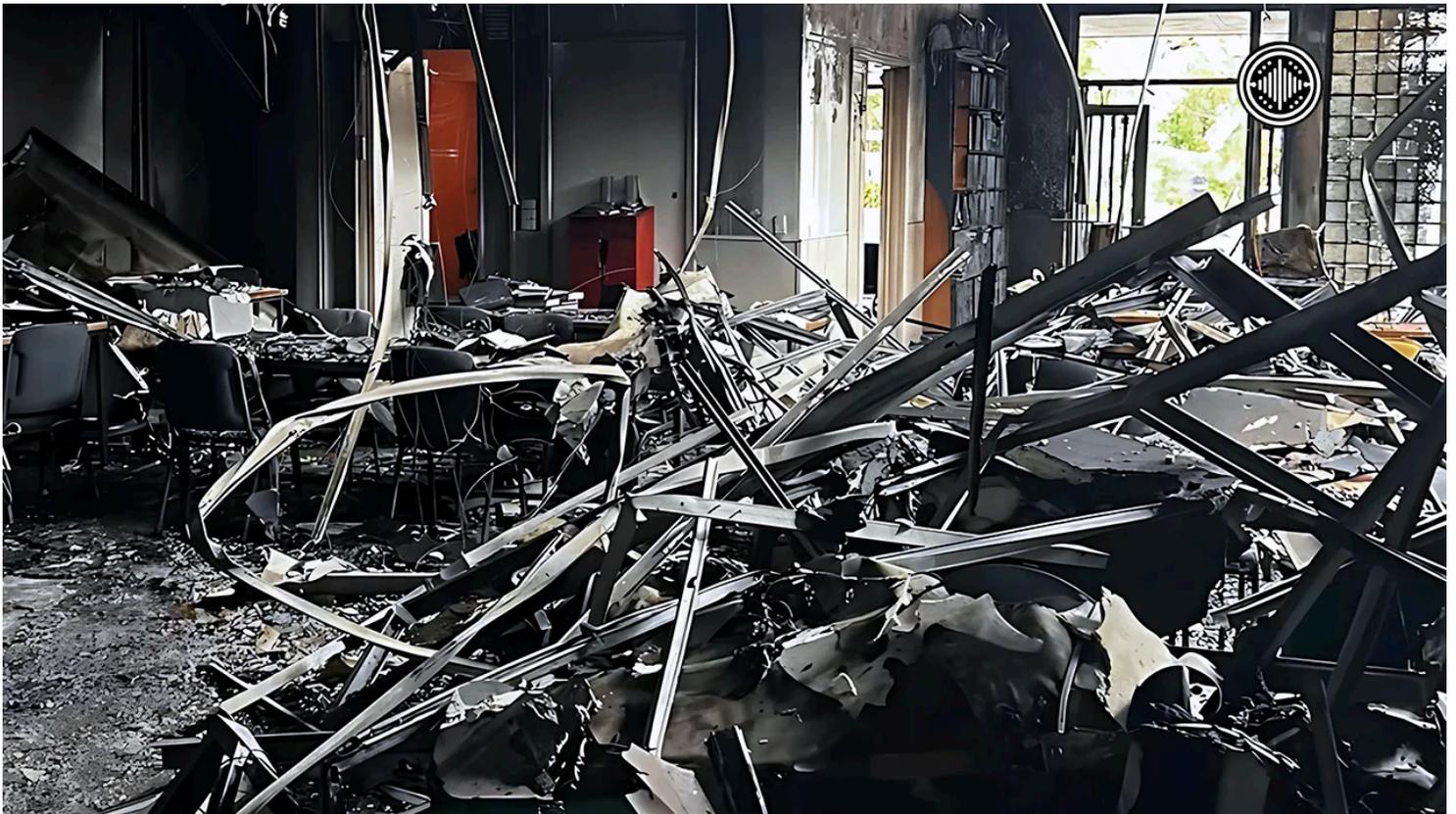# OpenVoiceNews Australia

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Melbourne Man Arrested in 2024 Synagogue Arson

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 — Categories: Crime

A 21-year-old man has been arrested in Melbourne in connection with the December 2024 arson attack on the Adass Israel Synagogue, authorities announced on Tuesday. The arrest represents a major breakthrough in what investigators have treated as a politically motivated act of terrorism.

Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Wendy Steendam confirmed the arrest occurred at a residential address in Melbourne. The attack, which took place in the early hours of

December 6, caused significant internal damage to the synagogue and left one worshipper with minor injuries.

"This arrest is a demonstration of our ongoing efforts to hold those involved to account," Steendam stated. "We now have charged two people as part of this investigation and I expect there will be more to come."

Two weeks prior, a 20-year-old man was charged with stealing the vehicle believed to have been used in the attack. Authorities clarified that while he was not directly involved in setting the fire, he is being investigated in connection with the broader planning.

According to police, masked individuals entered the synagogue carrying brooms and containers of accelerant, which they used to ignite the fire. The blaze damaged sacred religious items, including Torah scrolls, and was captured on surveillance footage.

The Joint Counter Terrorism Team, which includes Victoria Police, the Australian Federal Police (AFP), and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), has dedicated over 50,000 hours to the investigation. Authorities are examining possible coordination with individuals outside of Australia, although no foreign countries or groups have been officially identified.

AFP Deputy Commissioner Krissy Barrett said the motive remains under investigation. "We are working closely with our Five Eyes partners and other international agencies to ensure every lead is pursued and those responsible are brought to justice," Barrett said, referring to the intelligence-sharing alliance involving Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand.

The arson attack, currently the only antisemitic incident officially classified as terrorism in Australia, has drawn strong condemnation from both national and community leaders. Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke addressed Parliament following the arrest, labeling the incident a hate crime. He also reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to helping rebuild the Adass Israel Synagogue, pledging up to 30 million Australian dollars in funding.

"This kind of hate and violence has no place in Australia," Burke said.

The attack occurred during a documented rise in antisemitic incidents across Australia, which began following the escalation of conflict in the Middle East in late 2023. Earlier this July, a separate arson attempt targeted another synagogue in East Melbourne. Worshippers

evacuated safely and no injuries were reported, although authorities have not linked that incident to terrorism.

Daniel Aghion, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, welcomed the recent arrest and emphasized the importance of accountability in preventing further attacks of this nature.

Police continue to investigate both domestic and international connections to the December attack, with further arrests expected.