7 reported dead in suspected Vienna terror attack also said to target synagogue

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By Times of Israel and AP Staff

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/shots-fired-near-vienna-synagogue-prompting-massive-police-operation/>

An ongoing shooting attack was underway at several sites Monday evening in central Vienna, including in the area of a synagogue and the offices of the Jewish community, killing at least seven people, Austrian media reported, prompting a large-scale police operation.

Austrian Interior Minister Karl Nehammer said the incidents appeared to be a terror attack with multiple perpetrators.

The Kurier newspaper said at least one of the fatalities was a police officer. It added there were four people seriously injured in the series of attacks.

There were multiple gunmen, some of them still at large, according to messages sent to members of the local Jewish community.

Austrian news agency APA quoted the country’s Interior Ministry as saying that one attacker has been killed and at least one other could be on the run.

Reports said there was a hostage situation in the city’s seventh district. In addition, reports said there had been an explosion, with one of the assailants possibly blowing himself up.

Oskar Deutsch, the head of the Jewish community in Vienna, said the shooting took place in the street where the city’s main synagogue is located, in the first district, but that it wasn’t clear whether the house of worship had been targeted. He said there were no casualties among the Jewish community.

Deutsch noted that the synagogue and the community offices were closed at the time of the shooting, and asked all community members to stay away from the area.

Jewish residents have reportedly been urged to stay in their homes, lock their doors and take off their kippa skullcaps when outside.

“There are several injured persons,” police tweeted. “We are on site with all available forces. Please avoid all public squares in the city.”

Vienna police also tweeted that the exact circumstances of the incident were still being determined.

Police asked the public not to post videos from the scene, saying it endangered police and residents as the operation was still ongoing.