

Beat: Miscellaneous

8 children found stabbed to death in northeast Australia

-, 19.12.2014, 14:19 Time

USPA News - Eight children have been found stabbed to death at a house in the northeast Australian city of Cairns, officials said on Friday, but it was not immediately known who was responsible, though the mother of most of the victims was assisting investigators. The incident was first reported at around 11:20 a.m. local time on Friday when police were called to the city's Manoora suburb following reports of a woman with serious injuries.

When officers went to check inside the woman's residence, they located the bodies of eight children, Queensland police said. Cairns Detective Inspector Bruno Asnicar said the injured woman, who is 34 and in a stable condition, is not in custody and is assisting police with their investigation. The woman is believed to be the mother of at least seven of the children, with the eighth victim thought to be a relative. All were aged between 18 months and 15 years. Police were not immediately able to name a suspect, but authorities said there was no reason for the community to be concerned. "I can say this: As it stands at the moment, there's no need for the public to be concerned about this, other than this is a tragic, tragic event," Asnicar said. "The situation is well-controlled at the moment, there shouldn't be any concerns for anyone else out of this environment and as we progress further we will be sharing the results of our investigation." The local Cairns Post newspaper cited an unidentified woman as saying that she heard shouting and screaming coming from the residence at around 10 a.m., but she was not sure who the voices belonged to and she did not call the police. Other neighbors described the family as friendly, quiet and kind. Child trauma specialists, homicide detectives and other support staff were being flown in to Cairns from elsewhere in Australia to support local police. The massacre comes just days after Australia was shaken by a 16-hour-long hostage crisis at a chocolate cafe in Sydney, resulting in the deaths of two hostages and the hostage-taker. "The news out of Cairns is heartbreaking. All parents would feel a gut-wrenching sadness at what has happened. This is an unspeakable crime. These are trying days for our country," Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott said. "Tonight, there will be tears and prayers across our country for these children. My thoughts are with the Queensland Police and all who have to respond to this terrible situation." Queensland Premier Campbell Newman also expressed his shock at the tragedy in Cairns. "The whole Cairns community and the people of Queensland will feel the effects of this tragedy, particularly at a time of year when families come together," he said. "I ask that all Queenslanders reach out to those who may need support in coming days and do not hesitate to seek professional assistance if needed."

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-3125/8-children-found-stabbed-to-death-in-northeast-australia.html>

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619