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Bus driver dies after being set alight by passenger in Brisbane's Moorooka, police say

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VIDEO: [The 29-year-old bus driver died in what police said was a "horrific incident"](#). (ABC News)

Bus driver Manmeet Alisher has died after a man poured flammable liquid on him and set him alight at a bus stop at Moorooka in Brisbane's south.

Six people were on the council bus at the time of the attack on the 29-year-old driver, who was also known as Manmeet Sharma, with a number treated for minor injuries and smoke inhalation, police said.

Queensland Police Superintendent Jim Keogh said a 48-year-old man had been taken into police custody after the attack and while there was "no apparent motive" he has ruled out a link to terrorism.

"Words escape me, it's a horrific incident here in the quiet suburb of Moorooka," Superintendent Keogh said.

"A bus driver, going about doing his business, supporting the community, has had his life taken from him in what is a senseless and needless act.

MAP: [Moorooka 4105](#)

Key points:

- Police say there is "no apparent motive" but a link to terrorism had been ruled out
- Man, 48, in custody and cooperating with police
- Six people on the burning bus at the time helped out by onlookers

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PHOTO: [Bus driver Manmeet Alisher was killed in the attack.](#) (Facebook: Manmeet Alisher)

"The fire was substantial, he would have stood little chance."

Onlookers broke through the back doors of the bus to get the passengers out.

Superintendent Keogh said the passengers were visibly shaken and considered themselves lucky.

"It's lucky the whole bus didn't become engulfed in flames.

"They are traumatised ... it was rather rapid."



PHOTO: A man, 48, is in police custody after the alleged attack. (ABC News s: Casey Briggs)

Passengers 'lucky to survive'

Taxi driver Aguek Nyok was walking past the bus when the fire started and said he kicked in the bus's back door to free trapped passengers.

"Unfortunately I couldn't go inside because there were fumes," he said.

"It was smoky, you can't even think of going there, and the fire was getting higher and higher."



Superintendent Keogh praised the response.

"He certainly jeopardised his own life for the safety of those on the bus," he said.

VIDEO: 'A senseless, needless taking of a young life': Queensland police (ABC News)



PHOTO: A witness said there were children on the bus at the time of the attack. (ABC News: James Maasdorp)

One witness said she helped passengers, including some young children, get off the bus.

"They were lucky to survive," she said.

"[They were] just small children, [their] mum was screaming.

"I was scared."

Aster Benebru, the owner of a nearby bakery, said her shop on Beaudesert Road was closed at the time of the fire, but she gave a man an extinguisher to help battle the blaze.

"When I go I saw the bus burn, smoke coming [out]," she said.



PHOTO: Passengers on the bus at the time of the attack were freed by passers-by. (ABC News: James Maasdorp)

Brisbane Mayor Graham Quirk asked public transport users to show appreciation to drivers today, more than ever.

"It is a very, very sad day for council and the wider community — to see the loss of one of our drivers and in this way," he said.

He said the council would offer counselling to all of its bus drivers, and the council would pay tribute to Mr

Alisher.

"One thing we will be doing as an organisation tomorrow is to fly the flags of Brisbane at half mast as a mark of respect to our bus operator - it's just a very, very sad set of circumstances," he said.

He said an onboard camera captured the attack.

"Footage has been provided to the Queensland Police Service to assist them with their investigations at this time," he said.

"The advice that I am getting from police is that this is a random act."

Deputy Mayor Adrian Schrinner said council's thoughts and prayers were with the driver's relatives and friends.

"We lost a member of the Council family — the Brisbane family — today with the senseless and inexplicable murder of one of our bus drivers," Councillor Schrinner said.

"The best thing we can do as a community at this time is to show all of our bus drivers the appreciation and respect we have for them."

Passenger 'absolutely beside herself'

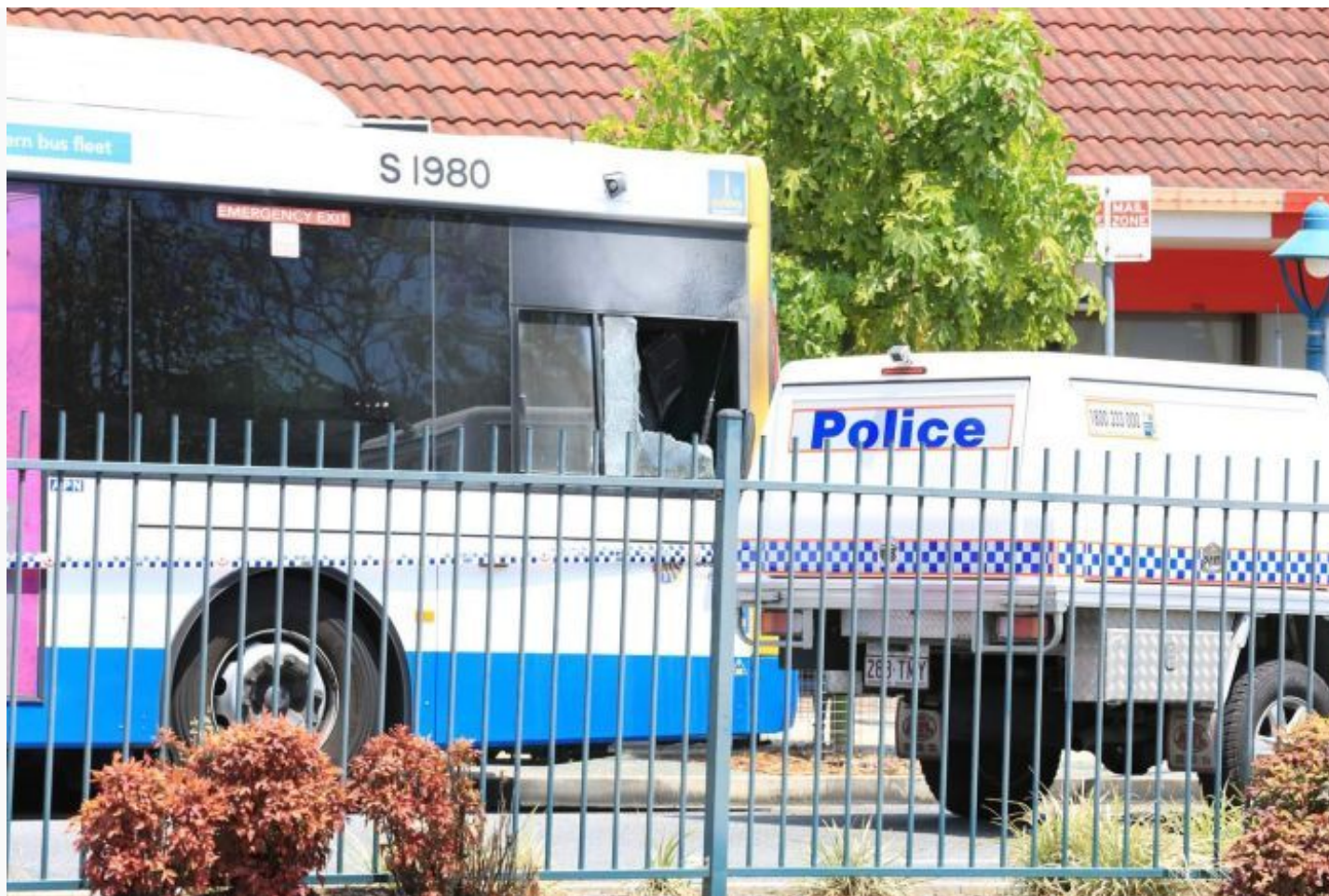


PHOTO: Police said there was no clear motive for the attack. (ABC News s: James Maasdorp)

Andrea Savage and her baby daughter were planning to catch the bus but were running late.

However, an acquaintance of hers was on the bus, with two children.

"Her youngest nearly got trampled by people trying to get off in the smoke-filled cabin, she was clutching at her little ones," she said.

"When I saw her she was just absolutely beside herself.

"This is the first time I've been thankful for running late."

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