

Beat: Miscellaneous

BREAKING NEWS: URGENT -- Gunmen take hostages at Sydney cafe, wave Islamic flag

-, 15.12.2014, 01:05 Time

USPA News - Gunmen are holding more than a dozen hostages at a cafe in Sydney's main business areas, local media reported on Monday, with local television stations airing images of hostages pressed against windows while holding a black flag with Arabic writing. The crisis began just before 10 a.m. local time when at least two gunmen entered the Lindt Chocolate Cafe at Martin Place in Sydney's main business area.

Channel 7, which said its newsroom near the cafe had been evacuated, reported that at least thirteen hostages had been taken, including staff and customers. Images shown by local media organizations showed hostages pressed against windows while holding up a black flag with Islamic writing, saying "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God." The flag is not specifically associated with the Islamic State (ISIS) group. The surrounding area was evacuated while heavily armed police took positions nearby, with additional reports that Sydney's Opera House was also evacuated. Channel 7 said aviation authorities had also closed airspace over Sydney. Police did not immediately release information about Monday's incident, but the siege began as Australian Federal Police (AFP) scheduled a press conference to announce the arrest of a 25-year-old Beecroft man who has been taken into custody in connection with an alleged plot to carry out a terrorist attack on Australian soil. The press conference was canceled as news of the siege broke.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-3095/breaking-news-urgent--gunmen-take-hostages-at-sydney-cafe-wave-islamic-flag.html>

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619