

# Deadly attack on South African mosque has 'hallmarks of Islamic State'

*From the [stabbed worshippers at a mosque near Durban](#) have said the attackers' motive was unknown but "elements of extremism" were involved.*

One Muslim leader said the mosque was targeted because it was a Shia place of worship that had received previous threats, exposing deep tension between the Shia and Sunni population.

"There are elements of extremism," said Simphiwe Mhlongo, a spokesman for the Hawks police unit. "It shows hatred towards the worshippers."

A local Islamic leader, Aftab Haider, said Shias in South Africa had been subjected to a prolonged hate campaign. He said the attack may be connected to the Sunni extremist group Islamic State.

"There has been a huge organised hate campaign in different mosques, radio stations and on social media against the Shia community. There have been threats at this mosque before, but not in the weeks leading up to this incident," Haider said. "It has all the hallmarks of the Isis style of operations in Iraq and Syria."

The assailants, who also set off a petrol bomb inside the mosque, escaped in a car. Emergency services found the victims lying in the forecourt.

"These people were not robbers. They did not want phones, they did not want laptops or money," said Ali Nchinyane, who was stabbed in the abdomen. "They came to the gate saying they want to perform prayers. They prayed and afterwards they

wanted to kill. "One of the suspects told me: 'I will kill you'. If I did not fight, I would have been dead," Nchinyane added, saying he used a martial arts weapon to defend himself.

Mhlongo said: "Law enforcement forces are [looking for the assailants], including private security, local detectives and police."