

6 dead after mass stabbing at Canada home, student who lived with family arrested

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Online Desk: A 19-year-old student from Sri Lanka is accused of stabbing and killing six people he lived with, including a 2 1/2-month-old baby girl and three other kids from a Sri Lankan family, Ottawa police said Thursday.

Ottawa police chief Eric Stubbs said an “edged weapon” or “knife-like object” was used by the suspect, who was identified as Febrio De-Zoysa. He has been charged with six counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder. Mass killings are rare in Canada.

Stubbs said the deceased are Sri Lankan nationals who recently came to Canada. He said they include a 35-year-old mother, a 7-year-old son, a 4-year-old daughter, a 2-year-old daughter and the 2 1/2-month-old baby girl as well as a 40-year-old acquaintance of the family.

The police chief said when the first officers arrived at the home the family’s father was outside and screaming for someone to call 911. Police received two emergency calls at 10:52 p.m. Wednesday.

The father is in hospital with serious, but non-life-threatening, injuries.

“This was a senseless act of violence perpetrated on purely innocent people,” Stubbs said.

Sri Lanka’s high commission said that it is in touch with relatives in the country’s capital, Colombo.

De-Zoysa made a brief appearance in court Thursday and mumbled his assent as the justice of the peace ordered him not to speak to the father who survived the attack or to four other witnesses who provided statements to the police.

His case was adjourned until March 13 to give him time to find a lawyer.

Police were called to the home in the Barrhaven area just before 11 p.m. Wednesday night. The suspect was arrested quickly after that, and police said there was no continuing threat to public safety.

Don Perera, a neighbor, said he met the family that lived in the home last fall at a Halloween party at the nearby Catholic elementary school. He said the father was from Sri Lanka.

Shanti Ramesh, who lives across the street, was alerted to a commotion late Wednesday. From her balcony, she saw a man sitting on the driveway of the home and yelling before two police officers arrived and carried him away.

On Thursday morning, five marked police cars were parked on the street and in driveways near the home, which is a middle unit of a row of brick townhouses.

Several people in white jumpsuits were going in and out of the home throughout the early morning, while parents and kids walked and biked by on their way to a nearby elementary school.

“Our first reactions are all ones of shock and horror at this terrible violence,” Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said.

Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe called the news distressing for all the city’s residents.

“It’s hard to believe,” he said. “It’s devastating and heartbreaking.”

Police have identified the victims as Darshani Banbaranayake Gama Walwwe Darshani Dilanthika Ekanyake, the 35-year-old mother; Inuka Wickramasinghe, a 7-year-old boy; Ashwini Wickramasinghe, a 4-year-old daughter, Rinyana Wickramasinghe, a 2-year-old daughter and Kelly Wickramasinghe, a 2 1/2-month-old baby girl.

A sixth victim, Amarakoonmubiayansela Ge Gamini Amarakoon, 40, was also found deceased.