

Seattle Center Tuesday Noon Press Conference

July 28, 2026

Talking Points

- Thank you for joining myself and Chief Barnes for the latest information on this ongoing investigation. I appreciate your partnership in sharing where we are in this investigation.
- We continue to make sure victims receive the care and resources they need.
- Yesterday, the medical examiner reported the identities of those victims: 56-year-old Ashley Whitehead, 44-year-old, Carlos Isreal Sanchez Villalba, and 19-year-old Junior Cee Niko Semo.
- Except for the 19-year old who we believe was involved, we understand that all others who have passed, or were injured, were bystanders.
- Thank you to those who organized and attended the vigil on the Seattle Center campus last night, mourning these three individuals and all who have tragically lost their lives to gun violence in our city.
- I appreciated being welcomed in community, including talking with people who knew the victims and connecting with several fathers who have lost children to gun violence. I also had a chance to talk with vendors, youth, others who were at the Bite of Seattle on Saturday and members of the Seattle Center community about their experience.
- To continue honoring all of those impacted by this senseless act of violence, the community is invited to gather for a silent vigil at 6:30PM Wednesday. Come support one another. Bring a flower or a written message to the International Fountain - a space for reflection, compassion, and healing.
- We're working with the Office of Economic Development and Seattle Center to reach out to the vendors impacted by the shooting and to understand what type of support they might need.
- And we remain committed to working with impacted neighborhoods across our city, from Rainier Beach to the Chinatown International District and Little Saigon to Capitol Hill to North Aurora, to address both the immediate impacts and the root causes of gun violence.
- Yesterday we let you know that at least two people exchanged gunfire outside the Seattle Center Armory, one in custody, a second identified as the 19-year-old deceased man. Police believe this was targeted gang related violence and continue to look for other possible suspects.

Commented [DS1]: [REDACTED]

Commented [HD2]: Suggest to cut -Redundancy

Commented [HD3]: Suggest replace - "mourning these individuals as well as all who have tragically lost their lives to gun violence in our city."

Commented [HD4R3]: but "celebrating" really needs to be cut in this context

Commented [HD5]: my concern is that some media members may make the inference that we are also honoring the shooter by this how this is worded. i would suggest either cutting "honoring" or cutting "these three individuals and"

Commented [HD6]: Suggest replace: "I appreciate being welcomed into community,"

Commented [HD7]: suggest "to working with"

Commented [HE8]: can we say anything more about how the investigation concluded that the deceased was one of the people who exchanged gunfire?

Commented [DS9R8]: @Sullivan, Jennifer

- At the press conference held Monday at noon, I shared our approach for dealing with gun violence long-term. We are bringing in an expert in gun violence reduction, including youth violence prevention, who will partner with city staff and our community-based partners to strengthen coordination and accountability across our existing bodies of work.
- We are also in communication with and reaching out to—
 - the National Network for Safe Communities,
 - Cure Violence Global,
 - the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, and
 - Cities United.

These are organizations with demonstrated track records of helping cities stand up successful gun violence reduction strategies across the country, and we look forward to learning from them about gaps and opportunities to enhance our existing gun violence work. I want to express thanks to Councilmember Rivera for a gun violence symposium she recently organized to help move this conversation forward.

- We will undertake this work in partnership with City Council, the King County Executive and Council, the Regional Office of Gun Violence Prevention, our elected City and County Attorneys, state and federal law enforcement partners, and, most importantly, our communities who are disproportionately impacted by the epidemic of gun violence.
- At the same time we are advancing new strategies at the local level, we know that reducing the number of guns on our streets requires state and federal policy changes. We are grateful for the leadership of the Governor and state lawmakers who advance this work in Olympia, and for our United States Senators and Representatives who tirelessly advocate for commonsense reforms in our nation's capital. Let them know that you care too.
- I continue to express gratitude to our police officers who have been working nonstop since this tragedy occurred and are providing regular updates to my office. Thank you to the victim advocates team at the Human Services Department and our community partners focused on violence interruption.
- And I also want to again recognize and thank the staff at Seattle Center, who have been steadfast in their support and coordination during an incredibly difficult time.

- And now I'll turn things over to Chief Barnes.
- [Follow-up] As you heard, automatic ghost guns were involved. I cannot stress that is why we have initiated a multi-pronged approach to fight gun violence.

Questions

1. How do you feel about the way Chief Barnes responded to the reporter yesterday? Are you taking any actions?

These are emotional, tense times. We are all in this together and need to focus on the victims and solving these crimes.

2. Mayor what do think about Councilmember Rivera's call to partner with the National Network for Safe Communities on a national gun violence reduction strategy?

Thank you for asking. We are interested in discussing possible opportunities with any organization that has a **proven track record** of providing technical assistance for **evidence-based gun violence reduction strategies**. And we are in conversation with the one Councilmember Rivera has shared.

3. I'm hearing reports of an ICE arrest that took place in the aftermath of the Bite of Seattle shooting at the Seattle Center. The vendor was gathering their equipment either yesterday or this morning and were picked up.

We received a report from our staff at Seattle Center around yesterday noon that ICE officials took one person who was on city property near the Fisher Pavilion. Upon hearing this, we sent Seattle Police Department to Seattle Center to confirm this report and to observe any further ICE activity. They did not observe any additional ICE activity. We are still gathering information about this and are working with our Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to assist community members. We heard from Seattle Center staff that the individual may have been a vendor at the event but have not confirmed this.