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At least 15 feared dead after shooting at Walmart store in Texas

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A gunman armed with an assault rifle opened fire on shoppers at a packed Walmart store Saturday, reportedly killing at least 15 people in the latest mass shooting in the United States.

Although the exact scale of the tragedy in El Paso, Texas, was not yet known, television networks put the numbers of dead at between 15 and 20 while medics reported treating dozens of victims.

After speaking to the governor of Texas, President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter that the "reports are very bad, many killed" while several Democrats hoping to defeat him at next year's elections said it was past time to tackle an "epidemic" of gun violence.

It was the second fatal shooting in less than a week at a Walmart store in the US and comes after a mass shooting in California last weekend.

One suspect was taken into custody, according to police.

Footage shot on camera phones appeared to show multiple bodies lying on the ground in the store's parking lot while El Paso authorities made a desperate appeal for blood donations.

Other footage showed terrified shoppers running out of the store as gunfire echoed.

- Two to 82 years -

Although police held off on announcing an exact figure, the NBC network reported 19 were killed and 40 wounded. CBS quoted the Texas attorney general as saying between 15 and 20 were dead while law enforcement sources told ABC News that at least 18 people were killed.

"I can confirm there have been fatalities. I cannot confirm how many," Sergeant Robert Gomez of El Paso police told reporters. "There have been injuries, there were several injuries. I don't have those numbers as of right now."

Gomez said that Walmart was "at capacity" at the time of the shooting, with 1,000-3,000 customers inside.

Various news reports said the ages of victims being treated at hospitals ranged from two to 82 years.

After officials initially said three people had been detained, Gomez confirmed that one person was in custody.

"I can confirm that it is a white male in his 20s," he told reporters.

"We believe he's the sole shooter."

US media named the suspect as 21-year-old Patrick Crusius, who lives in the Dallas area.

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