

# The Sydney Morning Herald

## Mob attacks police, smashes windows; Enraged crowd demands justice after boy killed

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Police riot squads have been pelted with rocks and bottles outside Kalgoorlie Courthouse, which has been forced into lockdown as tensions boil over after the alleged manslaughter of a 14-year-old Indigenous boy.

Teenager Elijah Doughty died on Monday morning after the scooter he was riding, which was reported stolen on Sunday and was linked to the accused, was involved in a crash with the 55-year-old accused's Nissan Navara.

Reporters on the scene said a crowd of about 200 people armed with rocks and bottles broke the gates at the court and surrounded police sent to calm the situation. The police, heavily outnumbered, used pepper spray and riot shields to defend themselves.

Shopkeepers along the town's main road, Hannan Street, shut their businesses.

"A little scary to say the least," a bystander said on Facebook. "I'm currently locked in a coffee shop."

Said another: "A protest mob have smashed up court windows, people running around with knives and wrenches, hiding weapons under cars. It's seriously f---ed out there. Witnessed an old fella pull a bunch of weapons from out the back of his ute and look me dead in the eye so I took off."

Tensions began building early in the morning, with Aborigines carrying signs calling for "justice" and saying "the lives of our kids matter".

As more police arrived, the crowd became more aggravated, Seven News reporter Monique Dirksz told Radio 6PR. "This is absolutely out of control," she said.

"The riot squad is here ... their shields are up, they are pushing the crowd back with batons drawn, threatening anyone who moves towards them; they are being pelted with bottles and anyone who gets close is being pepper-sprayed.

"They are surrounded ... police dogs are here, the police are in the middle of the street, there is a crowd of Indigenous people surrounding about 20 police officers surrounded by shields, they are absolutely outnumbered, I am not sure how this is going to go down."

WA Police said they understood there was "significant community concern" over the events and the investigation was ongoing. "WA Police has a responsibility to ensure the safety of the entire community and will actively police the current situation," they said.

"Aboriginal leaders are working closely with the WA Police."

A courthouse spokeswoman confirmed the accused's lawyer was granted permission to appear on his behalf and the matter had been adjourned. The accused will now appear via video link at Stirling Gardens Magistrates Court in Perth on Wednesday morning.

The spokeswoman said measures had been put in place to ensure all people in the court were safe. "The Magistrates Court hopes to resume its caseload as soon as possible today," she said. "A full inquiry will be held into the circumstances of this morning's disturbance."

Elijah, a well loved community member and football player, celebrated his 14th birthday on Sunday, according to the Kalgoorlie Miner.

His aunt told the Miner his death was the third in the family in the past few weeks.

She called Elijah a "bit of a prankster" but one who respected his elders and cared for his family.

"He survived all circumstances he found himself in and was a beautiful brother to the sisters he protected," she said.

Tensions have been growing within the Kalgoorlie community recently over what locals believe is a rising level of petty crime, mostly property-related offences.